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SELECT
SERMONS

Preach'd on several

TEXTS,

More especially on

ROMANS VI. 23.

By the Reverend, eminently Godly, and Learned

Mr. JAMES WEBSTER,

Late Minister of the Gospel in

EDINBURGH.

PSAL. cxii. 6.

*The Righteous shall be in everlasting
Remembrance.*



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Congregation, that look not so well from the Press which yet a Transcriber, or Amanuensis cannot observe, or be bold to alter, as the Author himself could.

But the Reader will find in the Main, what will afford both Edification and Delight. Here is excellent Matter; a Clearness of Thought, plainness of Style, an Evangelical Strain running through the Whole, and enliven'd with that Warmth of Affections; that they who have their spiritual Senses exercised to understand such Things, will see, not only Abundance of Learning, and other Gifts, to have been in the Author; but also a plentiful Measure of Grace well improv'd, in making him in good Earnest in his Master's Work, and inflaming his great Soul with a zealous Concern for the Salvation of Sinners. Here sublime Truths, and abstruse Questions, are handled in a clear Way, and made intelligible to the meanest Capacity. Here the Way to eternal Happiness is clearly pointed out, and the Necessity of close Walking therein enforc'd with the strongest Arguments. Here Holiness is press'd from right Topicks in a Gospel Way, and in a Scripture Style. He was far from neglecting to press the Practice of moral Duties, or countenancing so much as even the Appearance of Evil: Mean Time, he still gives every Thing its due Rank and Place, and is not for bringing in Obedience as a Part of our Righteousness before God, or for teaching his Hearers, that any Thing they do here can be a Plea at God's Bar, for Freedom from the Punishment we are all by Nature liable unto, or obtaining any Favour from God.

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God, or, that we can, by our lame Morality, in any Way entitled to eternal Felicity. With the Apostle Paul, the great Aim of his Sermons was, to discover and commend to his Hearers Christ, and him Crucified.

He had a Design to have published some Things on these Subjects, if the broken State of his Health and other Affairs had not hindered: Yet 'tis presum'd, what is here published may have its Use, tho' it labour under the common Disadvantage of all Posthumous Works, and wants the last Strokes of so able and skilful an Hand as the Author's,

He had in his younger Years his Share of Troubles, when the Church was under Persecution: And not only so, but suffered also since She enjoy'd outward Peace and Tranquillity. His true Zeal for the Glory of God, and against Sin, was misconstrued, his Admonitions and Reproofs were alledged to flow from other Springs, by such as counted him their Enemy for telling them the Truth. But the Awe of God, the Fear of deserved Judgments, and the sincere Regard to his Authority, who requires his Servants to be plain, whether People will hear, or forbear, oblig'd him to discharge his Duty; and whatever Men may say, Wisdom will be justified of her Children. The Author is now above all Trouble, out of the Reach of Censure and Reproach, which, notwithstanding the Endeavours of some, gave him no Trouble, with Respect to his own personal Concern therein, having still inward Peace, and the Testimony of his Conscience, that in Simplicity, and godly Sincerity,

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he discharged even this unpleasant Part of his Work, that some were so much offended with. He was always jealous of every Thing that looked like a Step of Defection, like a Suffering that which is evil, like a Coldness, or Indifferency in the Matters of his God, whose Displeasure he dreaded more than the Frowns of the greatest on Earth, and whose Favour and Countenance he valued above all Advantages others enjoyed here, with Respect to their Character, and outward Circumstances.

Such Entertainment, and Returns to Faithfulness from an ingrateful World, has been so customary in all Ages, that it is next to a Wonder, to see honest Ministers the World's Favourites: Yea, among the Heathens, they who distinguish'd themselves by appearing against the Vices and Corruptions of their Days, suffered for the same, such as Aristides, Phocion, Socrates, Epaminondas, Cato, and others.

Pascitur in vivis livor, post fata quiescit.

But the Servants of Christ must hold on, through Honour and Dishonour, by evil Report and good Report, as Deceivers, yet true, 2 Cor. vi. 8. Come, say they, let us imite Jeremiah with the Tongue, Chap. xviii. 18.

These being among the Author's last Sermons, 'tis hoped, they will be acceptable, especially to such as heard them with Profit and Delight; and if they meet with a suitable Reception, more may be expected, as it shall please the Lord to make Way for their Publication.

S E R.



SERMON I

ROMANS VI. 23.

*For the Wages of Sin is Death: but the Gift
of God is eternal Life, through Jesus
Christ our Lord.*



A N is made for a great and
noble End; but many live
not up to the Design of their
Creation. The Prophet Je-
remiah is sent down to the
Potter, to see what is do-
ing there: Why, Lord, I
see a Vessel upon the Wheels, and it promises
very fair, but immediately it is broke, and the
very Frame thereof marr'd. The great Pot-
ter,

ter, who had Sovereign Power over the Clay, made Man a goodly Vessel; but quickly it was marr'd. This made some grossly to err, and to say, That Hell was design'd after the Fall, and not from Eternity, and that it was not made on any of the six Days, or, if it was, that it behoved to be on the *second Day*; because it is not said of that, as of the other Days Works, that *God saw that it was good*! And therefore, say they, that Day wants a Blessing. However, as Matters stand now, the final Estate of Mankind is not one and the same, but two very contrary Fates.

We have in the Words read, 1. The two final Conditions of Mankind, Life and Death, Heaven and Hell, *The Wages of Sin is Death*, &c.

2. We have the Way to these two Estates, a Donation, and the Exercise of Grace, that makes the Godly Man's Path a Way to Heaven, *The Gift of God is eternal Life*; and Sin paves the Way to Hell.

3. We have the Connection betwixt the Ways and the Ends: The Connection on the one Side is meritorious, the Way deserves such an End, *The Wages of Sin is Death*; and the other is conveyed by Christ Jesus, *The Gift of God is eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord*. By *Eternal Life*, in this Place, is meant Heaven; for there the Lord commands the Blessing, even Life for evermore. But may some

some say, Did he never command a Blessing before? Doth he not command a Blessing of Life, when he justifies? Are we not spiritually dead, and doth he not command Life, when he blesses his People with spiritual Life? Yea, but this is the Top-Stone of all, there he commands the Blessing, even Life for evermore; Eternal Life without End, without Intermision, and the full Assurance of the Perpetuity of it; and the meritorious Cause is here, it is *through Jesus Christ our Lord*. It is not such an absolute Gift as *Socinians* imagine, as to exclude all Merit and Purchase: It indeed excludes all upon our Side; but the Son of God bought it; Eternal Life is the free Gift and Donation of God, with respect to us; yet merited and paid for by our elder Brother.

The Wages of Sin is Death. Death is taken in a very comprehensive Sense; but I take it now, and the Words warrand me to understand it here of Hell, the second Death; for there is an Antithesis, or Opposition betwixt the *Death* and the *Life* here spoken of; and if by *Eternal Life* Heaven is meant, then by *Death* Hell is to be understood, an eternal Death, even that Death which is opposite to eternal Life. *The Wages of Sin is Death*; there is no *venial Sin*, as the Church of Rome talks of; every Sin is *mortal*, every Sin has its Wages, and that no less than Hell, even eternal Death.

Take the very Words of the Text for a doctrinal Proposition, viz. That *Death is the Wages of Sin*. The Scripture is full of this, where it says, *Rom. ii. 9. Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth evil, &c. and Chap. viii. 13. If ye live after the Flesh ye shall die, &c. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil Ways, for why will ye die, O House of Israel! and Chap. xviii. 20. The Soul that sinneth shall die.*

Here are a great many Heads to be discours'd of, we will run through them very briefly, and shall not propose them all to you here, but shall name them as we go along.

First then, Let us see what Death this is, which is the Wages of Sin? There is a four-fold Death, which is the Wages of Sin: There is a natural Death; a spiritual Death, a political Death, and an eternal Death. 1. The natural Death is, the Separation of the Soul from the Body: Pelagians and Socinians say, That Man was naturally mortal, and in his own first Frame had the Seeds of Mortality sown; so that he would have died, though he had never sinned, except God had miraculously preserv'd his Life. And this they maintain, that thereby they may shun the Argument we have for Original Sin: For we prove all Children are guilty, because they die; say they, They would have died however: But we say, That Death is the Wages of Sin; and that whenever Sin enter'd into God's World,

World, the Balance, the Crasis and Temperament of Man's Body was broken: As in the Destruction of the World by the Flood, the Lord broke the Balance of the Elements, and the Element of Water prevail'd; and so the World was drown'd: And in the last Day, he will again break the Balance of the Elements, and Fire will consume the World. So, whenever *Adam* sinn'd, that Balance of all the Humors, and the Temper of Man's Body was broken and dissolv'd, and the Seeds of Mortality were then laid into his Nature, according to the Threatning, *Gen. ii. 17. In the Day thou eatest, thou shalt surely die.*

2. There is a *spiritual* Death, and that is, the Divorcing and separating of the Soul from the Life of Grace; and *Adam* died that Death immediately as he sinned. There is a great deal of Work among Divines, how to explain the total Loss of spiritual Life by one Action; and they have the more Difficulty in it, in Regard the *Socinians* deny the Loss of spiritual Life, and say, *It was not possible, that one Action could extirpate the whole Grace of God out of Adam's Heart.* We will not dwell on it; but it is plain, it was so, and we might account for it; That he, who the same Hour, and a little before his Fall, had a natural Complacency in the Presence of his Maker, Benefactor, and Father, now he abhors all Fellowship with him, and runs away from him. It

is plain, one Action may expel Life; one Stab with a Knife to the Heart will kill a Man. And, if we consider *Adam's Sin*, it was not a single Sin, but a Complication of Villanies, whereby all the ten Commands were broken: And not only so, but it is likely he expected present Damnation, according to the Tenor of the Threatning, *In the Day thou eatest, in dying thou shalt die*, according to the Hebrew. Now, as that Despair, and Fear of an absolute Judge, will make one to abhor him: so that Abhorency turn'd to the hating of God; and the hating of God expelled all the Life of Grace; and the Threatning did run so, If thou dost such an Action, thou shalt lose thy Life, thou shalt die the spiritual Death, even the Separation of the Soul from the Life of Grace. We are dead in Trespasses and Sins, and we are born so; every Child is still born, and not a Grain of the Life of Grace in him.

3. There is a *political* Death, which is the Wages of Sin. In Scripture, extreme Troubles are baptized with the Name of Death; that is to say, they are called Death: So, that whenever Sin entred the World, Multitudes of Mischiefs came at its back, pursuing the Rebellion and the Rebel close at the Heels, and an open Gap was thereby made for all the Evils that ever yet came into the World.

4. There is an *eternal* Death, and that is Hell;

Hell ; it is called in Scripture *the second Death* ; and this leads me to the next Class of Matter I design to speak to, *viz.* The various and different Names that this Hell gets in Scripture, which is the second Death, and Wages of Sin.

1. It is called *Tophet*, look to your Bibles, and remember it, *Isai. xxx. 33.* I have sometimes explained it to you, and, perhaps, some of you have forgot it. *Tophet is ordain'd of old, for the King it is prepared, he hath made it* (that is, God hath made it) *deep and large* ; there are many Folks to go to it, it must be a capacious Prison, *The Pile thereof is Five and much Wood, the Breath of the Lord, like a Stream of Brimstone, doth kindle it. Tophet is ordained of old* ; yea, God hath designed a Hell from Eternity, as well as a Heaven. What was this *Tophet* ? It was a Place within a Mile of *Jerusalem*, belonging to the Sons of *Hinnom* ; the Bible tells you that ; and all the Filth and Nastiness of *Jerusalem* was thrown out there, and a Fire was kept continually burning there, to consume that Nastiness. When the *Jews* came to be devilish Idolaters, they sacrificed their Children unto *Moloch* in that Valley of *Hinnom*. In this *Tophet*, they had the Image or Statue of a Man, and a burning Fire within this Brazen Statue ; and when it was red hot with Fire, they put their Sons in the Arms of it, whereby they roar'd to Death ;

and to drown the Cries and Sereichs of their own Children, they caused Drums to be beaten; and hence comes the Word *Tophet*, which in the Hebrew signifies beating of Drums. In this we have a lively Resemblance of Hell; God takes his rebellious Children, casts them into the Fire, puts them into the Arms of Destruction; and out of Christ: *He that made them, will not have Mercy on them, and he that formed them, will shew them no Favour.*

2. It is called in Scripture *the bottomless Pit*. I dare not here give Way to Fancy; but if I durst imploy my Invention, I would let you see, that it is very probable, that they in Hell seem to be going *down, down, down* for ever and ever. O the eternal sinking Condition of those that are shut up in the bottomless Pit!

3. It is called *utter Darknes*, Mat. xxv. 30. *And cast ye the unprofitable Servant into utter Darknes*. It is a Word seems to have two Senses; for the Meaning is, it is superlative, that is, extreme Darknes, or, it respects the Situation of a Place; becaule they had their dark Dungeons, and Prisons without the City, and the Darknes there was utter Darknes. Whatever be of this, in Hell there is no Light of Comfort, no Light of Hope, no Light of Joy, no Light of Satisfaction from the Company they are with; it is utter Darknes, a Fire, and yet without Light.

4. This

4. This Death and Hell is called a *Fire*; the Worm never dies, and the fire is not quenched: All Fire consumes, but this doth not. They were wont to burn the Bodies of great Men of old; and they that were not burnt, were laid in the Grave, and the Worms of their own Bodies consumed them. These two different Ways of treating the Dead, are alluded to here, to shew the Torments of Hell; they are both burnt, and the Worms eat them; the Worm never dies, and the Fire is never quenched. A learned Critick in the *Jewish Antiquities*, gives a very rational Exposition of that Passage which we have, *Mark ix. 49.* — *Every Sacrifice shall be salted with Fire*; that is, *The Bodies of the Damned shall be made so, as not to consume in the Fire; they shall be so salted with Fire, that the Fire of Hell, instead of consuming them, shall harden them more, that they may endure more.*

5. It is called *the Wrath to come*; whatever they suffer, whatever they have suffered, yet they will suffer more, and still more; yea, more for ever and ever; they will be ever paying, and yet never pay, it is still *the Wrath to come*: There is much Wrath present, much Wrath impending and hanging over Sinners Heads; but as if all that were meer Mercy, the Wrath is coming, which best deserves the Name.

6. It is called *Death, the Second Death*, and that's the Designation it gets in the Text, and leads me to.

A *Third Head, viz.* Why is Hell called *Death*? *The Wages of Sin is Death*; it is called so, on these following Accounts.

1. Because, of all Things (if we may call Death a Thing, which is a Privation in some Sense) Death is the most *formidable*, Death is the King of Terrors: There are many Armies, and every Soldier is a Terror; but Death is the King of all these Armies, and they derive all their Terror, almost, from the Union they have with, and their Subjection to this King. Why is Sickness terrible? Why are dangerous Wounds terrible; but because their King is at their Back? They are ushering him in as the great King of Terrors. Death dressed up in the most lovely Shape that is possible, yet is still formidable and terrible, and can never put off the dreadful Face of the King of Terrors. So Hell, nothing is more terrible, nothing is so terrible! O the Wrath to come! The Fire that is not quenched, is proposed in Scripture as a powerful Motive to deter us from Sin. Again,

2. Death is a *debasing* Thing; it brings the Man to such a low State, that he is despised; an universal Monarch (if there could be one such) when he is breathing out his last, he is so despised, that the meanest Peasant, or Beggar would not exchange States with him. No;
yea,

yea, he would be content to give his universal Command, and his whole Empire, for the Beggar's Life: O how poor a Creature is he now! A Man that now is talking with you, the next Moment he is a Piece of cold Clay, he sees none, he hears none, he feels none, he talks none; Death has turn'd him into a Piece of base Clay: So, Hell brings a Man into a State of most superlative Misery, to the greatest Pitch of Misery. I differ indeed from a great Man, who was a little too metaphysical in the Notion, when he said, *Better to be in Hell, than not to be at all: for, says he, they that are in Hell have still a Being.* But sure I am, it is better to be nothing, than to be continually upon the Rack; and we shall take Christ's own Word for it, when speaking of Judas, *It had been better for that Man that he had never been born.* Misery adds unto the Being, but gives no Perfection to it; it detracts from the Happiness, but adds to the Being and Ruin of the Sinner; but Happiness adds to the Being, and to the Perfection likewise. Death sets Man in a mean and low State, and deprives him of all Things; it is like a kind of Annihilation, when a Man comes to die, it is, as if he were going into nothing, the Earth is failing him; the Heavens say, Farewel, we will have no more to do with you; Friends say, we will not shoot that Gulph with you; he is left alone, he is deprived of all Things;
and

and all the Props that formerly supported and comforted him, are now taken from him: So is Hell, the Man is there deprived of all Things that gave him Comfort before. The rich Glutton had his well covered Tables, and his generous Wine to drink in full Bowls, he had his purple Raiment, and his Friends about him; but when in Hell, he is deprived of all, not one Drop of Wine there: Yea, tho he lift up his Eyes, and cry for one Drop of Water to cool his Tongue, yet he cannot have it.

But let us in the next Place consider some of the essential Ingredients of this second Death, such as,

1. The *Punishment of Loss*. In Hell the Man has lost his Friends, his Riches, his Honours, and his Pleasures, and lost the very Hope of ever coming at them again: But which is worse, he has lost his Soul, he has lost his God, he has lost Heaven, and he has lost all Hope of ever retrieving them.

2. There is the *Punishment of Sense*. There is not only the Loss of all good, but there is a present Sensation of all Evil: There is Torment, dreadful Torment; all the Parts of the Man are tormented, all the Faculties of his Soul are tormented, all the Members of his Body are tormented. If we had all our Bodies in extreme Torment, we would soon die, and the Torment would relieve us of it self; but when one Part is found, and another Part

In Torment, we may ly in such a languishing Condition long enogh: But in Hell, the whole Man, and the whole of the Man is in Torment; the Fire incorporates with his Soul, his Mind is tormented, his Conscience and Affections are tormented. That will be a dreadful Part of the Punishment we are speaking of.

3. The *Wrath of God*, that kindles the Fire, and is really the Fire it self, the Breath of the Lord's Anger like a Stream of Brimstone doth kindle it. Hell is the Effect of God's terrible Presence. For as he has a gracious Presence, that makes the glorified in Heaven happy; so he has a terrible Presence of Justice and Wrath, that torments the Damned. Hell is represented in Scripture by *Everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord*; not as being deprived of his Presence, but tormented by his Presence, which will be the efficient Cause of their Torment; he will be there to torment them with the Presence of an angry and Sin-revenging Judge, with Fury, and fiery Indignation in his Face, and trampling them in his Fury. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the living God.* *Falling into God's Hands*, is a very full and comprehensive Phrase, it signifies more than God's Hand falling upon us: As a gentle *April Shower* falling upon you, is not like your falling into the Sea; so when the Lord afflicts on Earth, even by the most grievous Punishments, that is but the Hand of God.

God falling on us: But, when he casts us into Hell, then we fall into his Hands: *It is a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living God.* Heb. x. 31. To fall into the Hands of all the Devils in Hell, would not be the thousand Part of that Torment. Let all the Devils be permitted to unite their Counsels, in contriving Torment, and unite their Power in inflicting of it, and it would be nothing but like the Scratch of a Pin, if compared with falling into the Hands of a living God.

4. *The Reflections of a guilty Conscience*, is another essential Ingredient in the Torment of Hell; this is the Worm that never dies, but is still gnawing, like what the Poets talk of *Promethæus* his Liver, which was still gnawed by Vultures, and next Morning was recruited again. It is no small Part of Hell, for a Man to have great Light, a capacious Mind, a retentive Memory, and all the Sins ever he committed, and all their Aggravations, with all the Folly of these Commissions, presented to his Conscience in full View. As, Such a Day I heard Sermon, and I rejected and despised the Offer of Christ; such a Day I had Convictions, and I choked them; such a Day I went to the Communion Table, when I was but deluding my own Soul; for I still remained wicked. O! every such Thought will draw Blood, and make a deep and abiding Wound. O! this inward Worm will beget a
strange

strange Sensation in the Soul; and yet it is the Worm that will never die.

5. All their Lusts and Corruptions go to Hell with them; this I think, to be indeed, as great a Part of Hell, as any other, even, almost, as great as the Wrath of God; it heightens the Torment of Hell, and is, as it were, the very Complement of it, for one to carry to Hell with him all his Lusts and Corruptions in their highest Strength and Vigour: I question, indeed, if sensual Lusts will go there; the separate Soul seems not to be capable of the Lust of Uncleanneſs; but Pride, and other Lusts will go to Hell with Sinners; yea, and will be acted in their outmost Vigour and Extremity. It is but a mad Notion to say, they do not sin in Hell; for Hell is the proper and main Seat, and very Center of Sin; and Sin never comes to its full Growth and Height, till it come to Hell, which is its native Soil: Even as Grace never comes to its Perfection, till the Soul be in Heaven. Sins and Lusts, in their full Rage, will be a very considerable Ingredient in the Torment of the damned. We see now, that contrary Passions in the Breast of a Man, and contrary Lusts, like jarring Elements, make a great Storm there: How much more dreadful Work, when all Lusts are turn'd loose, and all of them, by the enlarged Capacity of the Soul, made

much

much more strong? O! what a Hell will that be!

I shall now give you a few Thoughts, in order to consider the Properties of this Death, *The Wages of Sin is Death; Hell the second Death.*

1. Hell is a *curst* Death, *Depart from me ye Cursed*, Mat. xxv. 41. A Curse! ye will say, what call you a Curse? A Curse is defined to be the ill Will of a Superior towards an Inferior, ready to inflict Mischief upon him. *Depart from me.* But, Lord, if we must go from thee, send us away with thy Blessing, if thou give us no more. No, *Depart from me ye Cursed*, with all the Curses of the Bible poured down upon you, to plunge you into the lowest Hell, the Center of Damnation. That is a very great Burden, and a *curst* Death indeed! Men may die in the Fires, and be happy, they may sing in the Flames, as many a Martyr has done; but Hell has a Curse involved in it.

2. Hell is a *painful* Death, extreme Pain. All the Stings of Scorpions, all the Venom of Asps, all the Torment of Fire collected together, and a Quintessence drawn out of them all, O! what a Torment would that be! and yet Hell is infinitely a greater Torment; *I am tormented in this Flame*, says the rich Man.

3. It is a *lingering* Death; every Moment, as it were, their Life is expiring; and yet, to all Eternity they shall live; it will be an everlasting Death. We may conceive of the
Wicked

Wicked, as saying, when they get that final Sentence at the last Judgment, *Depart from me into the Fire*; if they should say, *O Lord, must we go to the Fire? How will we bear it? If we must go into it, bring us soon out again. No, Depart into everlasting Fire. Oh! that is dreadful! Ah! we do not believe it, we have not the Faith of it.* One Sermon of Hell would have awakened Peoples Consciences long since. It is everlasting and eternal Fire. The People of God do sometimes get sweet Meditations upon Eternity: And, O! when they get a View of Hell, what Terrors doth it fill their Soul with! till they get a View of Jesus Christ the Son of God, who delivered them from the Wrath to come, even from that everlasting Fire, where the Smoke of the Damned's Torment ascends up before God for ever and ever, where the *Worm never dies, and the Fire is not quenched.*

4. It is an *involuntary* Death. It is a strange Thing to imagine Patience in Hell, without murmuring; it is an chymical Notion, that I really think Men cannot conceive, to have the extremest Torment that is possible, and not to have one fretful Thought; that is the Doctrine of some Men, and ye know whom I mean. Christ's Death was voluntary, *I lay down my Life (says he) and I take it up again*: But the Hell of Reprobates is an involuntary Death; every Moment their Hearts

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are rising, and raging with Madnefs, against the righteous Judge.

Now, Let us speak a Word to the Relation that Sin and Hell carry to one another. It is not simply sinning, and then dying; but Death is the Wages of Sin, Hell is the Wages of Sin. (1.) Hell is the just Wages of Sin: yet some will be ready to say, *What Justice is that, that for a Minute's Sin, Men shall ly eternally in Torment? Is that Just?* But, O! they little know, or consider the Holiness of God, and the infinite Majesty of him against whom the Sin is: I could give you Reasons why it is just with God to damn Men eternally for one Moment's Sin. It is very just, and the Consciences of the Damned shall be made to say, That all is righteous he hath done to us; for we are worthy of Death, and deserve it. The Apostle to the *Romans* (Chap. i. 32) tells us, That the Conscience of the natural Man says, *They are worthy of Death that commit such Things*: The Wages is not only just, as to the equivalent Punishment of the Sin; but it is just, as to the Proportion, and as to the Kind. Men will not seek God on Earth, it is just, they should be deprived of him for ever; the Man commits gross Sins, and therefore justly he meets with a dreadful Torment. There is a Suitableness of the Punishment unto the Fault, and there is a Justness of the Demerit: For take one Sin, and lay it in
one

one Scale, and lay all the Hells of all the damned in the other, and there is more Evil in the Scale where Sin is, than where all the Hells are: So that the Wages are just. (2.)

The Wages are well paid; God will not be owing any thing to Sinners, they shall be cast into Prison, and there they shall ly, till they pay the outermost Farthing; and that will never be. (3.)

The Wages are due to Sin, tho' there were no Threatning at all, nor Curse denounced against the Breaches of the holy Law; yet the intrinsick Evil of Sin would make the Wages very just: The intrinsick Demerit of Sin is such, that God would inflict Punishment, tho' there were no Threatning.

The Reasons why God casts Sinners into Hell, and punishes them with the second Death, are, Not only the primitive Threatning obliges him to it; for if God had not got a Punishment from the Surety; he had been unfaithful to his Threatning, if he had pardoned any Man: For the Threatning was absolute and peremptory; and he would not have been faithful, if he had given a free Remission, except Christ had suffered Death for the Transgressor. But then again, hereby he retrieves the Glory which he lost by Sin; Sin threw Dust upon the most Glorious Attributes of his Holiness, of his Goodness, and of his Wisdom.

Now, the casting of Sinners into Hell, wipes off that Dust again, and retrieves his Glory, by bringing Sin into the Road of honouring the Wise and Faithful God, and proclaiming his perfect Purity. Every rattling of the Chains of the Damned has this Song in it, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of Hosts. His Justice is thereby honoured: If ye saw in a Place so many Men hang'd up on Gibbets, so many with their Heads cut off, and so many others cast into a Fire, ye would be ready to say, *O! there is a severe Judge here; and if they deserve this, O! he is a righteous and just Judge.* Every one in Hell proclaims the spotless Justice of God. Yea, I will tell you more than that, and ye must not think it strange; for it is a great Truth, That Hell is appointed to commend God's Love, not to the Damned, but to them in Heaven: For, how will they admire his free Love, when they cast their Thoughts below, and consider, there is my Father in Hell, there is my Mother, there is my Son, there is my Daughter, who, before my Conversion, were less guilty than I, were far less Sinners than I, and yet they are there tormented, and I am here comforted. The half of Heaven lies in being delivered from Hell; and the Half of Hell lies in being deprived of Heaven. I say, The Love of God shines conspicuously here; for if an hundred Malefactors
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be condemn'd to die, and be all brought to the Gibbet, and Ninety nine of them hang'd up, and the hundredth is spar'd by the King, would not the pardoned Man see much Love, and much Kindness in the King, who spar'd him that was equally guilty with the rest: So it is here, when Millions of Millions go to the Fire, and here one, and there one, gets eternal Life.

And then he inflicts Hell on Sinners for Sin, to bring them to an Acknowledgement of their Madness; for they are so devilishly stubborn, that, till they be brought to the very last Extremity, they will not so much as say, We have been Fools. O! how much will Sinners suffer, before they take with their Faults! A Whore will be whip'd through the Town of *Edinburgh*, it may be, twice, or thrice, and yet be so mad upon her Inclinations, that she will still go on. It is the last Extremity that a Man or Woman must be brought unto, that will make them acknowledge they have been foolish, and have dealt foolishly. Yea, but God will make every one of them to say it, Devils and Men, and all together.

Now, I add no more, but, O! how much is the Elect World obliged to Christ! He suffered Death, the Pain of Sense, and the Pain of Loss: He suffered the Father's Wrath, and swam through Hell; he swam thro' the River of his own Blood, he drank of the Brook in

the Way. Drank of the Brook! Yea, he drank a whole Ocean; or, as by a very Rhetorical and Hyperbolical Expression, it is said in Job (Chap. xl. 23) of Behemoth, *He trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his Mouth.* Christ drank up the whole Ocean of God's Wrath at a Draught. This is even that Jesus, who delivered us from the Wrath to come. The Lord himself acquaint us with him.



S E R M O N II.

R O M. vi. 23.

For the Wages of Sin is Death, &c.

I Remember a great Divine says, *If a Papist own the Pope's Infallibility, and defend their Idolatry, and set up for the Merit of Congruity, he cannot but plead for the Merit of Condignity.* What is that to say? Why, it is a doing good Works, which will oblige God, in Point of Justice, to give me Heaven; because there is an intrinsick Worth in these good Works, laying an Obligation on God, That if he refuse me a Reward for them, he does an unjust Thing. It is wonderful, how this proud Doctrine could enter into the Brain of a Man; but the Devil has inspir'd it. And the Apostle Paul, as if he had foreseen it, he guards against it in our Text. How does he express

express it? He doth not say, *The Wages of Sin is Death*, and *the Wages of good Works is eternal Life*; indeed that would have been the Doctrine of the Church of Rome. What says he then? He says, *the Wages of Sin is Death*; What is the Wages of Obedience then? Eternal Life? No: Eternal Life is *the Gift of God*. Indeed it is the Wages of Christ's Obedience, but, with Respect to Man, it is the Gift of God: *The Wages of Sin is Death, but the Gift of God is eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

We told you, last Day, what Death is here meant, and that it is especially to be understood of the *second Death*, tho' the other Kinds are not to be excluded. We insisted then on the Doctrinal Part; and before we go to the Application, I shall shewly give you one Designation more of the *second Death*. It is in Scripture called *Vengeance*. Hence Jude tells us, Ver. 7. *Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Cities about them, are set forth for an Example, suffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire.* There was a Goddess among the Pagans, which they call'd, ΔΙΚΗ, *Vengeance*; and when Paul had the Viper hanging on his Hand, the Barbarians of Malta say, O this must be an ill Man, a Murderer; for tho' he has escaped the Sea, yet ΔΙΚΗ the Goddess of Vengeance will not suffer him to live, *Acts xxviii. 4.* It is taken for the Sentence of Judgment against a Person; So, when Festus declared Paul's Cause to Agrippa,

grippa, he tells him how the chief Priests and Elders of the *Jews* desired to have *Avon* against *Paul*, that is, according to some Versions, That Damnation might pass upon him, to be condemn'd to die, *Acts* xxv. 15. There is no Word, next to that, of *the Wrath of God*, that is more expressive of the Pain of Hell, and of the Nature of that Torment, than this Word *Vengeance* is : And it implies in it these Things,

1. There is a *judicial Process* in God's casting Sinners into Hell : He does not as an absolute Monarch inflict Punishment on a Subject; No, the righteous Lord loveth Righteousness, and the Judge of all the Earth will do right. He makes a judicial Procedure, and is, as it were, deliberate in casting them into Hell. That is a strange Expression, *Gen.* xviii. 20, 21. *Because the Cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their Sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the Cry of it, which is come unto me: And if not, I will know.* Strange! Was the Cry of their Sin an uncertain Sound? Was it an inarticulate or confused Noise? Or, Did not God understand the Language of that Cry? Is this the Meaning of God's speaking thus? No, no; the Thing lay here, God, after the Manner of Men, thus expresses himself to stop all Mouths that would quarrel any Thing like Rashness in his Proceedings, as if he would punish or condemn

demn Men upon Report : It shall not be said so, saith the Lord, I will go down and search into the Merits of the Cause, before I condemn or destroy them. Neither would he pass Sentence, or cut off *Adam* and *Eve*, until there was a judicial Process in their Case, and they were summoned before him. Hell is Vengeance ; for it is a Sentence inflicted by way of a judicial Process : God is the Judge determining, such Things ye have done ; they have God's Witness in their Bosoms, which is like a Thousand Witnesses ; they have the Conscience, a Deputy God, owning they have done so, and not only owning Matter of Fact, but acknowledging the Relevancy of the Libel, and that they deserve to die for it.

2. There is in this Vengeance, an intense Hatred of Sin, and a Zeal and intense Love to the Glory of God. Vengeance is an intense Hatred of every Thing that eclipses the Glory of God, an Abhorrence of the Sinner, the vile Sinner, the Monster : There is nothing vile in God's Eye but Sin and Sinners, and this Vengeance speaks forth his great Indignation against both. I must tell you, there is a Word in Scripture which I find often mistaken by some modern Divines, *Isa. xxviii. 21,----- That he may do his Work, his strange Work, and bring to pass his Act, his strange Act.* Here, they say, God's Justice is called his strange Work, when he comes to revenge and

and punish. O, say they, Mercy is essential to God, but Justice, and the Acts of taking Vengeance are against his very Nature, as such, and against his very Inclination. But the Truth is, we know no Inclinations in God, as to outward Acts, either of his Justice or Mercy; there is absolute Sovereignty exercising Acts of Mercy and Justice: And sometimes he takes as much Pleasure in executing the Sentence of Death, and inflicting of Judgments, as he does in bestowing Mercy. Impenitent Sinners, his openly avowed Enemies, that are Factors for Hell, Agents for the Devil, supporting that Kingdom of Darkness, they do all they can against God, and he has as much Pleasure in casting them into Hell, as in taking others into Heaven and Glory. He will magnify his Justice, by trampling Sinners in his Fury, and staining all his Raiment in their Blood, and such a Manifestation of his Hatred of Sin and Sinners, is a Vengeance indeed, and with a Witness.

I come now to give you some more Reasons, why God inflicts the dreadful Punishment of Eternal Death upon Sinners. As,

1. The Lord, in punishing Sin with Hell, shews the Glory of his Power; this is Paul's Divinity, Rom. ix. 22. *What if God willing to shew his Wrath, and to make his Power known, endured with much Long-suffering the Vessels of Wrath*

Wrath fitted to Destruction. There is a great deal of Power required to keep a combustible Thing in the Fire, and yet never to be consumed; to harden the Bodies of the Reprobate so, as they shall for ever burn, and yet, like *Moses's* Bush, they shall never be consumed. The Lord manifests the Greatness of his Power in inflicting these Torments, and also in supporting under them.

2. He shews the Glory of his *Holiness*, and his Rectoral Displeasure against Sin, as he is the Governour of the World. The Lord says, I forbid that Monster to enter into my World. But Sinners will remove the Bounds, and therefore I will be avenged upon them; he is the Rector of the World, and he must see to the Authority of his Law, and keep up its Reputation. A Law without a Sanction is in Danger of being despised, and a Law with a Sanction that is not execute would be despised: But here the Law, and every Branch of it, is fenced about with a Hell. If ye break through the Law, and meddle with Sin, ye will fall into a Hell. The Rectoral Displeasure calls for it, in order to keep up the Reputation of his Law: Indemnity emboldens Offenders, and a constant Remission would harden Sinners; and therefore he must give them a Hell: For by inflicting of that Punishment, he brings Sin into some Order with all other Things in the Universe. For all Things

Things are made for him, and for his Glory; but Sin is a crooked Step, and endeavours to defeat God of that, his Glory. Now, when he punishes Sin in Hell, as much Revenue of Glory is got to his Justice by that Hell, as was lost to his Holiness by Sin; and thereby Things are brought into some due Course again, and made to serve God's great Design. O! Is it not righteous that God should inflict this Punishment, and that they who will not do his revealed Will, his secret Will should take Place upon them? Sinners make God, as it were, to suffer, and to cry out, *Amos ii. 13. Behold I am pressed under you, as a Cart is pressed that is full of Sheaves.* And if he is made to suffer under them, they shall at length be made to suffer by him: They will suffer nothing for him here, they will not be at pains to mortify Sin, nor will they part with any Thing for him; Well, says the Lord, I shall deprive them of all Things; they do what they will now, and I will do what I will with them hereafter. And this leads me to a Question, *viz.*

Is it just, for a little Whiles sinning, to punish Folk with eternal Death, the Worm that never dies, and the Fire that is never quenched? Is it just to punish temporal Actions with an Eternity of Trouble? I shall only give you a few Reasons to hold forth the Equity of it.

1. Sin deserves an infinite Punishment, as being committed against an infinite God. This is a certain Rule, That the Measure of the Offence is to be taken from the Quality of the Person offended. If I offend a Beggar I do ill, but if I offend a King who is my Father, I do yet worse. When the Sin is directly against an infinite Majesty, it deserves infinite Punishment: Now, the Creature being a finite Subject, a Being that is not capable of infinite Punishment; therefore, what cannot be suffered all at once, must be drawn and spun out to an Eternity, that the eternal Duration may come in the Room of deserved Intensity and Infiniteness; so that they must ever be paying, and never able to pay all, because they cannot pay all at once. And is not this just?

2. Consider the Relation he stands in to Sinners; he is not only our Sovereign, but our Father and Benefactor; so that Sin is an Ingratitude added to Rebellion. It is a contumacious affronting of his Majesty, and a trampling upon his Goodness, and effacing the Image of a Father. O! it is a killing Aggravation of Sin, that it is against all the Relations we stand under to him.

3. Is there any Injustice in giving you your Choice? God proposes very fairly to you, (this holds with respect to the Visible Church) by laying before every one of you Heaven and Hell,

Hell, Life and Death: Now make your Choice. *Behold, I set before you this Day Life and Death: If ye say, O! I love Life, and I love the Contriver, the Purchaser, the Author and Giver, and with my Soul I lay hold upon eternal Life, and embrace it with both my Arms, and I choose it for my Portion; well, it is yours: But if ye say, I will go on in my Sin; I will venture upon the Event, I make Choice of Death: Can ye give a Reason for your Choice? Why will ye die O House of Israel? But if ye will be so unreasonable as to choose Death, who can blame God to give you your Choice? The Wages is your own seeking, and ye work for them, and ye deserve them well, for ye have wrought well for them. And tho' the Will cannot directly wish or choose Hell, as Hell, or as it is Evil, yet consequently, virtually and really, while ye abide in Sin, and continue in the Course that leads from God, ye say, ye will choose and take Hell, ye will prefer Hell to Heaven, and Death to Life. Is it any Injustice then in God to give you your Choice? But Oh! Why will ye die O House of Israel?*

4. Though there were no Decree of Reprobation, tho' there were no Threarning annexed to the Law, tho' it were possible (to speak with holy Reverence) God should lay aside, and not inflict any positive Torment upon you, nor lay you under his Wrath for your

your Sins, yet every Sin, of its own Nature, would be your Punishment. For Malice, Envy, Ambition, Pride, and the like, these themselves are a Death and Punishment to the Man in whom they reign. The *Pagan* Poet says, *The Sicilian Tyrants had no greater Torment than that of Envy*: So let Sinners alone, and let nothing trouble them but themselves, and they carry a Hell in their own Breasts. Be where they will, Death goes along with them, and they carry their Punishment about with them; the contrary Corruptions and Lusts in Man, raging like contrary Elements, or like so many wild Horses dragging a Man so many fundry Ways, make a continual Death and Hell within. And is there any Injustice in God, to let Natural Effects flow from their own Natural Causes?

5. The Wicked they sin all their Eternity; the Sinner sins his Eternity here, for if he should live all *Methuselah's* Days he would still provoke God; let him live from *Adam's* Creation to the last Man on the Face of the Earth, he would still sin: Now, he that sins all the Time he has got, should he not suffer all the Time that God gives him after? Again, the Wicked sin even in Hell it self, that Place of Torment cannot, doth not sanctify their Natures; they are under a Law, and have a Work even in Hell, the rational Creature can never be exempted from a Work, be

in whatsoever State it will: *The Devils are Liars from the Beginning, and Murderers from the Beginning*, and they continually sin in breaking the Law. The Damned are under a Law to love God, that is interwoven with our very Make and Constitution at first, and is a natural Emanation from our Relation to him as our Maker, that we should love him; and if there be not love of God in Hell, there is Hatred of him, and Rage against him, and is not that sinning? Now, seeing Sinners are still sinning while they are on Earth, and even in Hell, is it any Injustice to let them still suffer?

This Doctrine confutes a great many Errors and Heresies.

1. It confutes the *Romish Church*, that distinguishes between *Mortal* and *Venial Sins*, saying, *there are some Sins that deserve Hell, and others do not deserve it*, and they condescend only upon seven *Mortal Sins*: We will not trouble you with them now. O, say they, *if all Sins be mortal and deadly, and if every Sin deserves Hell, then all Sins are alike; ye make the least Sin to be as great as the greatest, because it deserves Hell as well as the greatest.* The solid Answer, (saith the Great Mr. Calvin) is, *That Argument strikes as much against your selves, as against us: For ye maintain several Mortal Sins, and these differ among themselves as to Aggravation; but according to your Argument they*
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are all alike, being all Mortal they deserve Hell. In short, tho' two Crimes deserve the same Death, yet one of them may deserve it better than another, and more than another: If a Man kill his Enemy in a Duel, he deserves to be hang'd for it; but if he kill the nearest Friend without Provocation, he more deserves to be hang'd for it: There can nothing be done to him beyond Death, but yet he deserves Death more for the one Crime than for the other. Tho' every Sin deserves Hell, yet some Sins deserve it more than others; and it was but a Hellish Distinction and Contrivance, to distinguish *Mortal* from *Venial* Sins: But it was to make the Pope's Kitchen reek the better; for when People go out of the World, without doing Penance for, and not being absolved from *Venial* Sins, they must (as Papists say) go to *Purgatory* a while, and suffer there, and pay well for it, when prayed out of it by so many Masses. But the Bible, and the Text is clear, that every Sin deserves Hell; *the Wages of Sin is Death*, not this or that Sin, but indefinitely and universally it is said of all Sin, That the Wages thereof is Death.

2. This Doctrine confutes the *Atheist*, that denies a Hell altogether: Now-a-days some Folk are beginning to laugh at Hell; well, whom the Light will not convince, the Fire shall; they will know it when they feel it, and

and when they cannot be redeemed from it. We need not go to a Detail of this Controversy, there is nothing clearer, than that the Soul is immortal, and may and must live for ever hereafter. The Soul that has been acquainted with Christ and his Grace, it will get Glory; and if a Soul die under the Power of Corruption, it will sin for ever, and be in Hell for ever. The Immortality of the Soul might be proven many Ways, but I will not dwell upon it now.

3. It confutes the *Socinians*, who maintain a Hell; but they say, it will not last long. This is the Opinion of the *High-Flyers* among them (all of them deny the Eternity of Hell's Torment) *That the Soul of the wicked Man, just as it separates from the Body, is cast into Hell, and is consum'd into nothing, and there is no more of it: The Body never lives again, and the Soul is consum'd into nothing.* Some of them again own a Hell, but they make it a little too late, by delaying it, and saying, there is no Hell till the Judgment; and some of your *English* Doctors are saying the same: For every Doctrine must be overturn'd as the Time goes. The Parable, *Luke xvi. of Dives and Lazarus*, can scarce be well understood, if the Scope of it be not to teach us, That Sinners go to Hell before the general Judgment. *The rich Man lift up his Eyes in Hell; his Hell was not delayed till the Day of Judgment? No,*
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the Man was taken just out of his rich Bed where he lay, and out of that Bed with its brave Silk Hangings, his Soul goes and plunges directly into Hell: The wicked shall thus be turned into Hell. But according to their Argument, the Wicked should not get Hell, until the last Day. O, say they, *There must be a Sentence past before an Execution, there must be a judicial Process before the King warrand any thing; so that there is no Hell, until the last Day.* But we own a particular Judgment at Death, and a general Judgment at the last Day. Others again say, *That the Soul sleeps until the Judgment of the great Day;* and that is directly contrary to the whole of Revelation. Is there any Thing clearer than that of Paul, Philip. i. 23. *I desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.* But if Paul's Soul was to sleep immediately after his Death, it was far better to remain upon the Earth, and to be serving God, and acting for him by his Labours, in preaching Christ, and converting Souls, and getting Communion with God here: This was far better, than to have his Soul cast into such a long Sleep, which is Brother to his being made nothing; and in Paul's Account, could never be reckoned preferable to his serving God upon Earth. The Thief's Soul was not to sleep, but, *To Day* (says Christ) *shalt thou be with me in Paradise.* Some again maintain a Hell, but, they say, *It is not*

the positive Parts of it, it is not the Illapses of God's Vengeance upon them, it is only the inward Reflections of their own Consciences: So that we may say, they separate what God has joined; Christ joins the Worm and the Fire together, when he speaks of the Worm that never dies, and the Fire that is not quenched: *Episcopius* cuts off the Fire, he quenches that Fire, and gives us only the Worm of a reflecting Conscience on what we were, and are. Again, others, who are very ancient, and near fifteen hundred Years since, they maintain, That all the Wicked go to Hell; but afterward, as certainly as they are there, they will be brought up again. But this is contrary to the Word, which clearly holds forth the Eternity of Hell, and which cannot be exprest in more emphatick Terms than these, *The Worm never dies, the Fire is not quenched. The Smoke of their torment ascends before God for ever and ever, they shall be cast into Prison, and shall not come out, till they have paid the uttermost Farthing; and that will never be; yea, Origen goes farther, and says, As these in Hell may go to Heaven, so these in Heaven may fall down to Hell; and so may change up and down as often as their Will pleaseth. His Tenets were too near of Kin to those of Pelagius, who maintained the Power of Free-will. And then, to add no more, a Prelate, a learned Man in our Neighbour Nation, preaching before the Queen, of the Torments of Hell,*

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goes on another Footing than the *Socinians* ; for, they say, when they speak of eternal Torments, *Eternity is not taken for Duration without End, but it is taken for the Continuance of a certain Period.* Yea, but this Man goes another Way to Work ; he owns the proper Notion of Eternity ; but he makes it like the Threatning, which God may inflict, or not, as he pleases. Now, we think an absolute Threatning will be execute, and the conditional Threatning, if the Condition be not performed, will be execute. Never a Threatning God made, but it was executed in the Way he made it, and the Wicked must go to Hell, because the Threatning to them is peremptory. The Account we have of the Judgment in the xxv. of *Matth.* is no Threatning, but is a kind of Prophetick History, *Then shall the wicked go to everlasting Torment, and the Righteous into Life eternal,* is a plain Prophecy ; and it is a curst Device of Hell, to seek to shake or stagger our Faith concerning the Punishment of Hell, that so we may take a full Liberty and Scoup to sin, in hope to go unpunished. O ! get the Faith of Hell, and the Fear of Hell, and flee from it ; O take Warning ! Happy is the Minister, happy is the Dispensation, happy is that Motion of the Spirit of God that will warn you effectually to *flee from the Wrath to come.* Such Doctrine is not unsuitable for this secure Generation, when People are beginning to laugh

at Hell. I remember very well of a profane Atheist, whom I was ordered to wait upon at his Execution; he laugh'd at Hell, and in a cold Winter Day he said, *I wish I were in Hell, I would not be chill'd with astonishing Cold.* Great Atheism! Great Security! Men may talk as they will, but did they believe the Reality of an After-punishment, did they believe the Extremity of it, did they believe the Eternity of it, they would not think it safe to affront God by a wicked Life; no, they could not.

The Doctrine serves also for Information. Is it so, that such a Death as I have told you of is the Wages of Sin, and will be the Punishment of Sinners? Then it informs us of a great many Truths, as,

1. It lets us see what all the unconverted are; they are under a legal Death, under a spiritual Death, and Heirs of eternal Death. Every Sinner is under the Sentence of Death, only he sometimes gets a long Reprieve: Some are condemned to die 60 Years after this, some 40, some 20 Years, and some, it may be, a Week. The Execution Day is condescended on, and fixed by the Great Judge, and the Pannels are reserved for it, only a Remission is offered, and a Reprieval given. The unconverted are also under a spiritual Death; and if we had Eyes to take spiritual Views of such as are out of Christ, we would see them
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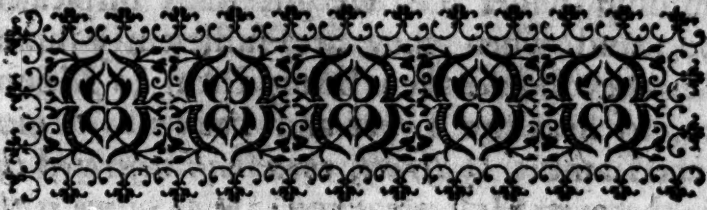
as so many Ghosts walking up and down in their Winding-sheets, which is a very terrible and dreadful Sight.

2. It lets us see the Folly of Sinners; By sinning they take hold of Death; where Sin is the Work, Death is the Wages. Wicked Men are called *Fools* in Scripture, they lay hold on that which procures their eternal Death. It is said of the Adulterer, That he never again takes hold of the Path of Life, but chooses Death, and cannot make a Retreat.

3. It lets us see why Death is so terrible to the Ungodly; Why? It is, because it is the Harbinger of Hell: It is not Death its alone that is so frightful, tho' that be indeed terrible; the Separation of two dear and loving Companions, Soul and Body, and the Soul going into an unbodied State, cannot but be frightful enough: But that is not the great Business, nor the main Thing; Death, tho' called *the King of Terrors*, yet, is but a Vassal to the other King; for at the Back of Natural Death comes Eternal Death: And therefore, when the wicked Man is dying, he may say of Death as *Elisha* said, *Look when the Messenger cometh, shut the Door, is not the Sound of his Master's Feet behind him?* Death it self would be little or nothing, if there were not a Hell, a second Death at the Back of it.

4. It lets us see the Wisdom of the Godly, in choosing rather to lose all, than venture on Sin. Why, says he, shall I venture upon a Hell? Should I not rather venture upon losing all that I have? Nay, I will do nothing that will bring a Hell upon me, I know *the Wages of Sin is Death*. I say, it lets us see the Wisdom of the Godly, who choose rather to abandon All, than to lose Eternal Life, and to suffer rather than to sin.

5. It lets us also see the Need of a Law-work, and that to preach a threatening Sermon is necessary for Conviction, Contrition, Humiliation, Fear and Sorrow. It is, because there is a Hell, we must preach the Terror of God to you, to drive you away from Hell: *Knowing the Terror of the Lord, we perswade Men*. It might also let us see the Death of the Wicked; it is no voluntary but a violent Death; even tho' they die in a gentle Decay without Trouble, yet it is a violent Death. When they bring a Man out of Prison to go to the *Grass-Market* to die, he comes out with Violence; so is a wicked Man's Death. And it lets us see again, the Excellency of Christ's Death, and what Obligations we are under to him. Why? He died a painful, cursed, shameful, lingering, and yet a voluntary Death, else our Lot had been the Second and Eternal Death.



S E R M O N III.

ROM. vi. 23.

For the Wages of Sin is Death, &c.

TH E Apostle, on all Occasions, proclaims our Salvation to be intirely of Grace. Were he alive now, he would be heartily sorry to see the *Baxterian* Doctrine preach'd in the World; he excludes all Works as giving any Title to Heaven. *The Wages of Sin is Death*; but eternal Life is a mere Gift: The Contrivance was all of Grace, the whole of the Execution and Consummation is Grace. *The Wages of Sin is Death*: He begins with that; and indeed it is the Gospel Method, first to preach Hell, and then Heaven; Ministers should bring their People to Mount *Sinai*, to hear the Thunders there, and the loud Sound of the Trumpet, and the Voice

Voice of Words there, and the Mount all trembling under the Weight of a displeased God; and when they are sufficiently humbled, they should then bring them to Mount Zion, to hear the sweet and heavenly Voice of the Lamb. *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thy self*, there is Hell preached: *But in me is thy Help*, there is Heaven at the Back of it.

Before we go to the Inferences, we shall propose and answer a few Questions, as,

1. *Is Hell a real proper Fire, or not?* That is a Question among Divines; and really they cannot well determine it. But there is no Reason for the Papists their being so positive in asserting a material Fire just now, when the Spirits that are in that Prison are unbodied: It is not so proper for a Fire to affect an unbodied Spirit. Indeed, the Motions of our Bodies do affect our Spirits, and torment our Souls; but that is by Reason of their close Conjunction; and even after the last Day, when the Body rises, they cannot determine, whether there will be a material Fire, or not.

2. *Are there Degrees of Torment in Hell?* There can be no Question of this, tho' some make it a Question. As there are Degrees of Glory in Heaven, so there will be different Degrees of Torment in Hell. We see plainly from Scripture. *That he that knows his Master's Will, and does it not, shall be beaten with many Stripes.* Luke xii. 47. So we read, that

that *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida* shall have a hotter Hell than *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, *Mat. xi. 22.* Certainly there are Degrees of Torment, according to the Measure of Folks Sin; and if they work well for Hell, they shall have the more Wages; *For the Wages of Sin is Death.*

3. *Are the Torments of the Damned now in Hell at their highest Pitch, and outmost Extremity?* I answer. They are not; for after the Reunion of the Soul and Body, they will have additional Torments: And therefore, tho' they be in Hell, they will be unwilling to come out of it; because they will be sifted before the Tribunal of God, and get a heavier Sentence.

The 4th Question is more curious than edifying, viz. *Where is Hell?* It is ridiculous to condescend upon the Place. And to tell us, that that natural Sun is Hell, is a weak Argument to prove it. We know nothing of the Place where Hell is, but that it is below the higher Heavens; it is spoken of always as below these; and we know not more about it; there is a Hell that we may fear, we know not where it is, that we may always fear; for we may be very near it, and not know where it is; We may be walking upon the Confines of Hell, and not know it.

The last Question is, *Whether or not should Men decline to work, to shun the Wages?* That is to say in plain English, *Should Men forbear sin-*

sinning for fear of Hell? I answer, (1.) All the ungodly and unrenewed can act from no other Principle, they cannot forbear the external Sin from Love to God, or Hope of Eternal Life, Fear is the Thing that commenceth the Work. (2.) After that Folk have got Religion, we say, That fear of Hell should not be the predominant Motive: Love to God, and the Hope of eternal Life, should have the Ascendant of this Fear. But, (3.) To act only from a Fear of Hell, is a slavish Act; and to act only from Hope of Heaven, is a mercenary Act; but to act from Love and Hope, and, in its due Place, to fear Wrath, is certainly Duty. (4.) We do not think, but some eminent Christians may have such a Plerophory, and full Assurance of Faith, that they serve God, not at all from Fear of Hell, for they have it not, but from Gratitude, Love, Hope and Joy; *The Wages of Sin is Death*: Sure, my Acting from a holy Fear of Hell, in its due Place, is a great Duty. The Apostle *Paul* was a very eminent Saint, he had Assurance, he had no slavish Fear, but he had a Fear of Aversion to do so and so. *I bring down my Body, lest, when I preach the Gospel to others, I my self be a Castaway.* It was not from real Doubting; for he was sure he would not be a Castaway, but a holy conditional Fear.

But

But now, we come again to some more Uses of Information, and from what Doctrine we advanced from eternal Death its being the Punishment of Sin, and that all Sinners are condemned to Hell, and the Sentence still remains, till they act Faith in Christ: For we can never understand the *Antinomian* Doctrine, That Justification is before Faith. It is gross, and against express Scripture.

Is it so then, as I have said, it lets us see how much we ought to pity the poor unrenewed Man. Did ye see a Man in Prison condemn'd to be burnt alive, condemn'd to the Stake, and to Morrow he is going to it; had ye any Bowels, it could not but challenge your Compassion, and draw out your Soul's Sympathy. Now, all unrenewed Persons are so many Criminals condemned to die: Some of them, 'tis true, get a long Reptrieve, but they are all condemn'd Men in Law, and condemn'd to die eternally. Sirs, ye that are Godly, have too little Pity upon the Ungodly. What! have ye an unconverted Husband? have ye an unconverted Wife? hast thou an unconverted Child? You have then a dead Husband, a dead Wife, a dead Child, condemn'd to the Pit, and ought you not to pity, and have Compassion on your own Flesh.

2. It lets us see why God spares the unrenewed so long. Why? if ye cut them off, it is no less than eternal Death, eternal Fire for ever

ever, and that is the Reason why he adjourns the Stroke. If I inflict it, they are gone, and gone for ever and ever. If ye saw a Prince exercising Clemency to a very ill Man, and frequently giving him a Pardon, or something equivalent to it, ye would quarrel him; yea, but he is loath to destroy, but the Stroke of Justice comes at length. If God should delay punishing for ever, he would overturn his own Attributes; but his Patience, and Long-suffering for a while; lets us see, that he has no Pleasure in the Destruction of Sinners; for, when he comes and inflicts the Punishment, they are ruin'd and destroyed for ever.

3. It lets us see what to judge of our Time in the World, it is a Time of Probation under a Sentence; it is a Time of Trial allowed us, that we may seek the King's Indemnity. He does not strike, and cut us down in the Act of Sin, and on the Spot where it is committed; but adjourns the Stroke of Execution, with Design that we may address the King, the Prince, the Son of God, for a Remission; and that is our great Work in the World; I am born condemn'd, and I am allowed Time to seek a Pardon.

4. It informs us whence are all these dreadful Terrors that are in the Breasts of Reprobates at some Times. Ye have heard of *Francis Spira*, and what a Hell he had in his Breast, and many one has died with the Language of Hell

Hell in their Mouths, and the Torment of Hell in their Consciences. What is the Reason of all this? Why? it is even a Prologue of that doleful Tragedy that is to be acted eternally upon their wretched Souls; it is just the Flame of Hell coming to meet them, to suck, and draw them down like a Whirlwind.

4. It informs us, what a rich and valuable Blessing the Gospel is, that proclaims a Pardon to the Condemned. O! should it not be highly valued! that we who are condemn'd to die, and to die the worst of Deaths, to die for ever, and to be burnt alive, should yet hear the Gospel offering Mercy, and a Remission to us! O, what a Blessing is it! and how acceptable should faithful Ministers be, who bring us so good Tidings!

The Doctrine serves also for Terror to a great many Folks; and though they may all be included in the Name of *Ungodly, and without Religion*; yet this General will not reach the Conscience, there must be a detail; and we shall run through some of them very briefly.

1. It speaks Terror to all the *Unregenerate*; they are born full of Sin, and there is no Change wrought upon them; and, *Except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of Heaven*; that is, He shall go to Hell. There is really a natural Connection betwixt Irregenerate-

heration, and eternal Death: For, lay aside the Decree, lay aside the Threatning; let God, (to speak with holy Reverence) if it were possible, stand, as it were, neutral; and let Sin, and the Sinner stand alone, and he has a Hell, he cannot get Heaven: Hell (if we may speak so) is more agreeable to him than Heaven it self. What made the Angels to become Devils; not only they were banish'd, but they left their first Habitation; they chus'd rather to go to Hell, after they had sin'd, than to stand in Heaven in the Presence of their Judge; and it would have been more Torment for them to have stay'd in Heaven, than to be chas'd out of it: For Happiness doth not so much ly in the Perfection and Excellency of the Object, as in the Agreeableness of the Faculty with the Object; and the Unregenerate wanting a Conformity of Nature to the Holiness of Heaven, and of God, Heaven would be a Hell to them, and they could take no Pleasure in it.

2. It serves for Terror to all them who have not saving Views of Christ, *He will come in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance on them that know not the Lord.* They may have some common Notice of God, of his *Being*, of his Attributes, and of his Providence. They may have some acquired Knowledge, and some common Illumination, and yet want the saving experimental Views of God in Christ; and

and whoever want that, he is coming in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance upon them.

3. It may terrify all that will not close with Christ, will not lay hold upon an offered Christ, will not embrace the bleeding High-Priest, will not clap about the Mercy-Seat; but, by their Unbelief, would hew the Throne of Grace into Pieces: All that will have nothing to do with Christ, here is Matter for Terror unto them: *He that believes not, is condemned already; for the Wrath of God abideth upon him. Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your Sins.*

4. It speaks Terror to them that hate Christ, as a King, and say by Words, either in Heart, or by Practice, *We will not have this Man to rule over us.* The Language of the Will and Practice of many Folk this Day is, Let a *Papist* reign over us, Let a *Mahometan* reign over us; yea, let the Devil reign over us, rather than a *Protestant* King: But the Language of the Hearts, and Practice of far moe, says, Let Sin and Satan reign over us, let our Lusts reign over us, rather than Christ should be our King. Well, what says Christ? *Luke xix. 27. But those mine Enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.* The plain Meaning of that is, Cast them into Hell. It speaks Dread and Terror unto them, that look upon Christ's Scepter, as a Rod; his Laws, as Tyrannical;
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and that look upon the sweet Cords of a Mediator, as unsufferable Chains.

5. It may frighten all such as are inhospitable. The whole Process (*Mat. 25.*) runs upon this, Ye would not feed my Children, ye would give them nothing, ye would not visit them, but ye would rather let them starve. Inhospitality is a dreadful Plague. Many Men have their Barns full, their Coffers full, their Tables full, and yet the Godly are starving. Not only ye hide your selves from your own Flesh; for the poorest are made of the same humane Nature; but ye hide your selves, and shut up your Bowels against the Flesh of Christ; for Believers and Christ have the same Body, Flesh and Bones, as the Apostle says, *Eph. v. 30. For we are Members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones.* Yea, the Godly, perhaps, have scarcely to succour their Lives, and know not of the next Meal; and yet ye feed liberally, and hoord up. O! the Curse of God will be upon you in that Day, and he will charge you with it. Why did ye bestow your Goods upon your Whores, upon your Dishes, and upon many Things superfluous? Or why did ye hoord up Riches, not knowing to whom ye were to leave them, and my People just beside you in a wanting Condition? Go into everlasting Burnings. O Sirs, for Christ's Sake think on it, and let never People say, Why does God damn me for what I can-

I cannot do? Yea, ye can do this: Can ye not open your Purse? Can ye not open your Hand? Can ye not open your Eyes, to see and take Pity on the Poor Saints of Christ? What? Is there any Devil in Hell, that can hinder you to go to your Coffer, and take out a Piece of Money, and give to a Godly Body, or to a starving Family? And yet ye will not give a Crumb here below, tho' ye expect, that he should give you a Crown and eternal Life above.

6. This Doctrine may be terrible to all that are *unfruitful*. *The Ax is laid to the Root of the Trees, every Tree that brings not forth Fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the Fire*; and there's the Fate and End of it. It is not enough to be planted in the House of God, to have the fair Leaves of a Profession, and the promising Blossoms of Resolutions. No, but ye must have Fruit, and good Fruit. The Ax is said to be laid to the Root of the Trees, to shew the Imminency of the Stroke, and to shew the fair Warning that is given them, and also to shew the total and universal Ruin that hangs over their Heads; for it is not the lopping off a luxuriant, fruitless Branch; but it is laid to the very Root. Trust me, Sirs, this lies heavy upon you, that do not pray alone, that do not pray in your Families: Ye do nothing at all for God, ye are idle in his Vine-yard, and ye are unfruitful. Now, a Professor that

is unfruitful, he is, of all God's Creatures, the most useleſs: If a Vine ceaſe to bring forth Fruit, it ſerves for nothing, ye cannot make a Pin of the Timber thereof. O! it ſpeaks Terror to the unfruitful.

7. It may be terrible to the Unrighteous, and to them that cheat their Neighbours, by Oppreſſion, by Fraud in Trade, and many other Ways whereby People may be unjuſt. *He hath ſhewed thee, O Man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God. Mic. vi. 8.* He begins with *doing juſtly*; God hath eſtabliſhed Man's Property, and then fenced it in with the whole two Tables; and if a Man break the Hedge, God will ruin him: *For the Wrath of God is revealed from heaven, againſt all Unrighteouſneſs of Men.*

8. It ſpeaks Terror to the *Apoſtate*: There remains nothing after that Deſection, but a fearful looking for of Judgment: All they that have forſaken the Truth, all they that have forſaken their Duty, all they that have forſaken their Profeſſion, there remains nothing for them, but *a fearful Looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which ſhall devour the Adverſaries.* Heb. x. 27.

9. It ſerves for Terror to the Perſecutor: If they, that will not give an Alms to the Godly, muſt go to Hell, much more they that deſtroy the Godly, and take all from them: That
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was the Sin of the late Times, when a Man durst not have served God, but they would have poynded him, fin'd him, banish'd him, taken his Head from him, and quarter'd him too: The Persecutions of *Scotland* are a dying Sin, and will, in due Time, bring Wrath upon the Land: The *Persecutor* may be terrify'd: The Apostle says, *2 Thess. i. 6. Seeing it is a righteous Thing with God, to recompense Tribulation to them that trouble you; That is, to cast them into Hell: And it is observable, that ye will seldom see a Persecutor really repent.*

10 Again, It is terrible to all impenitent Persons, who, after their Hardness, and impenitent Hearts, *Treasure up unto themselves Wrath against the Day of Wrath, and Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God.* They that will not be brought to forsake Sin, and to choose the Way of the Lord, they that will not be brought to cast away Idols and Lusts, and to a sweet Compliance with God's Will revealed in the Gospel; they are treasuring up Wrath: Indeed they have a great Treasure; but it is a very sad Treasure, it is Wrath against the Day of Wrath.

11. It speaks Terror unto all the Wicked, of whatever Denomination. There are three Setts of wicked Folk, (1.) Some live in the habitual Practice of all Vice. (2) Others again, live in the habitual Practice of one single Sin, perhaps Drunkenness, swearing, or Unclean-

ness; and for other Vices, they do not much practise them. (3.) There are some who are guilty of one single Action; but it is such an Enormity, and so hainous, that it infers as much Depravation of Soul, as an Habit of a lesser Sin. One deliberate Act of Blasphemy, or Idolatry, may be as great a Wickedness, and shew the deprav'd Nature of Man's Soul, as much as the constant Habit of some Sin; and what is the Fate of such? *The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the Nations that forget God.* Psal. 9. 17. Shall they be turned into Hell? If I may so speak, there will not be need of much Violence to turn them there; for they go naturally into it. Heaven and Hell are the two Centers, and ye know that every Body has its own Center, and naturally goes to it; so heavy Bodies go downward, the Fire ascends upward. Heaven is the Center of holy Souls, and Hell is the Center of wicked Souls. Ye will say, How go Saints to Heaven? I do not deny that Angels conduct them; but I truly believe they will as naturally go thither, as the Fire goes upward; and so, Hell being the Center of the Wicked, it sucks and draws them down: It is a very significant, and emphatick Word that is used, where it is said, *Acts* i. 25. *From which Judas by Transgression fell, that he might go into his own Place:* It does not say, That he might go to Hell; for every one knows that it was so; but he went to his own Place.

Place; *Judas* went to Hell, as a Man goes to his Home. The Wicked shall be turned into Hell, all Swearers, all Liars, all unclean Persons, all Cheats, and all Sabbath-Breakers; yea, all the Species and Classes of them. O! here is Terror to them.

12. And, *lastly*, It is Matter of Terror for Papists. We have a very dreadful Word, *Rev. xiv. 8: And there followed another Angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great City* (ye are not ignorant, that that City is *Rome*) *because she made all Nations drink of the Wine of the Wrath of her Fornication: And a third Angel followed him, saying with a loud Voice, If any Man worship the Beast, (that is, maintain the Popes Supremacy) and his Image, and receive his Mark in his Fore-head, or in his Hand, (now observe what follows) the same shall drink of the Wine of the Wrath of God, which is poured out without Mixture, into the Cup of his Indignation.* The Wine is Vengeance, and the Cup is Vengeance; the Wine is Wrath; and it is poured into a Cup of Wrath, even the Cup of God's Indignation, and he shall be tormented with Fire and Brimstone, in the Presence of the holy Angels, and in the Presence of the Lamb. If ye have any Occasion, ye may tell the Papists, That there lies Matter for Terror to them.

I come now to a Word of Lamentation. Is it so, that Hell is the Punishment of Sin,

and that Sinners may expect their Wages to be eternal Death: Then let us lament the profound Security of Sinners. O! it is a Miracle of Wickedness, that Men condemn'd to die, and knowing no Way of Escape, are yet so unconcern'd; O! that is lamentable; I read, that in the *Ethiopick* Sea, as Men go to the *East Indies*, the Air is for most Part clear; But if there appear a Cloud, tho' but the bigness of a Man's Hand, they expect presently a dreadful Storm; the *Hollanders* call it the *Ox-Eye*, it is so little, and at a great Distance; but it is a Cloud that presently increases, and the whole Air is turned into a Storm. Now, there is not only the Bigness of a Man's Hand, that is the Appearance of a Storm; but truly, we have all the Prefages of a Storm; and yet we are secure. *Ephraim* has gray Hairs here and there, (that is, he is decaying in his Policy, and in his Riches) yet he knows it not; yea, he is yet more secure, even to a Prodigy, *The Lord's Anger hath set Jacob on fire round about, yet he knows it not, and it burns him, yet he lays it not to Heart.* Hof. vii 9. Isai. xlii. 25. *Scotland* is pining away, and we are daily growing poorer: We have little Religion, little Zeal for God, little of his Spirit, and much Sin; and yet Folk do not, will not see it. God is cutting off many; yea, many of our young Ones this Day are dying, and a great many, in some of our Towns, are taken off in

a Week: So that the Lord seems not only to be as a Moth, but is almost turn'd to be like a Lion unto us; and where is our Security, or to what Place can we betake our selves, except to that very odd and dreadful Expression, as we have almost in all the Bible, *Isai. xxviii. 15. We have made a Covenant with Death, and with Hell are we at Agreement?* A strange Covenant! Agreement with Hell! in Covenant with Hell! Pray, what are the Articles of that Covenant? I might tell you what they are on both Sides; the Articles on the Man's Side are, I promise to do all that I can for you, I shall agent for you, I shall be a Factor for Hell, an Agent for the Devil's Interest; and I shall do every Thing lies in my Power against God. Well, says Hell, I shall not trouble you, ye may escape, there is no Fear; here is a Covenant, and here are the Articles: But the plain Meaning is this, We are as secure, and as fearless of Hell, as if there was no such Thing; and if there be a Hell, we have made a sure Bargain, that we and it shall not hurt one another, we have made an Agreement with Death; that is, they cry, Peace, Peace; and behold, sudden Destruction! What do we know when a Plague may come, when a Sword may come; God has often diverted the Stroke, but he will not always do it, seeing we continue an impenitent Nation.

But it may be asked, whence is it that People are so stupid, while they are condemn'd
to

to be burnt alive in Hell? Whence comes it, they are so secure and fearless? I shall give you two or three popular Causes of it. *First*, It comes from downright *Atheism*: Trust me, the Man, that sins habitually, and willingly, does not believe that there is a Hell, *Psal. x. 13. Wherefore doth the Wicked contemn God? He hath said in his Heart he will not require it.* Concerning his Power, he can crush us before the Moth, our Times are in his Hand, and he can cast us out of the Earth when he pleases, and he is stronger than we. Why then doth the Wicked contemn God? He says in his Heart there is no After-reckoning; that is, there is no Hell. O Sirs, did Folk believe there is a Hell, would they do as they do? Would they think it safe to affront God by the Series of a wicked Life? Take this *Simile*, If a Magistrate should set up two or three Gibbets in *Edinburgh*, and proclaim, That every Man guilty of Adultery shall be hang'd, and did Men believe, that the Magistrate is in earnest, and to confirm them, did see some really execute, they would forbear the Sin, whatever Pleasure be in the Whore; they would not venture on the Gallows, as it were before the Door of the Harlot's House, if they were assured, that whenever they went in, and came out again, they would be string'd up; the Harlot in that Case would not have many Visits. To speak the Thing as it really is,

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People have so little Fear of Hell, that if it were not for the Laws of Men, the World would turn a Hell worse than it is; there would be more stealing, more murdering, and more of all Villanies abounding, if it were not for the Restraint of human Laws: It is not Religion that keeps Men sober, very few are kept that Way.

2. Many entertain false Principles, and that makes them secure; it is not one or two, but many, and even among them that pretend to Learning, that advance and harbour such Notions and Apprehensions as these, *It is probable, as many and more go to Heaven as to Hell; there may be Half and Half, it is an equal Wager; and therefore I may escape Hell as well as be damned.* Another false Principle is, *Any little Thing will please God; and if but love his People, or appear for his Cause, he will not damn me.* Thus it was with *Abijah* the Son of *Jeroboam*, there was some good Thing found in him toward the Lord God of Israel, *1 Kings xiv. 13. He shall go to the Grave in Peace.* Any Thing, even a faint Wish, will do my Business. Many false Principles, like these, might be condescended upon.

And to say no more, many People have a fear'd Conscience; and a fear'd Conscience is a dumb Conscience, it is a sleeping Conscience, it is an unactive Conscience; it is unfaithful, it does nothing, it says nothing. God's De-
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puty in the Soul is this Day, in a Manner,
 saying to many a Man, ' I am weary speak-
 ' ing to you; I have told you often of your
 ' Whoring and Drinking, your Cheating and
 ' Lying, and thus and thus it was, but ye
 ' would not hearken unto me; I have got a
 ' Commission to let you go to Hell as fast as
 ' you can, and I am to give you no more
 ' Checks nor Challenges. The Consciences of
 Men are seared, they mock at Hell: Where
 are his Judgments? Where is his Law? They
 make a Theatrical Diversion of these Things,
 The Lord himself awaken you,



S E R M O N IV.

R O M. vi. 23.

But the Gift of God is Eternal Life, &c.

WE may see here the two final States
 of Mankind exprest by very signi-
 ficant Words, *Death* and *Life*:
 The greatest Evil is in Death, it is the Com-
 plement of all Evil, yea, and the Compound
 of all Evil. On the contrary, Life is the ra-
 dical

dical Blessing, the comprehensive Blessing, the Fountain and original Blessing.

I have discours'd, at some Length, on the first Part of the Verse, *The Wages of Sin is Death*: I shall now give you only a Word of Exhortation, and go to the other Part of it. I told you, that by Death Hell is meant, the *second Death, eternal Death*; these are set in Opposition to *eternal Life*: And I conclude what I have said with this one Exhortation, *O! Fear Hell*. Why has God planted the Passion of *Fear* so deeply in your Nature? Why has it taken such deep Root, and is interwoven with our very Make and Frame, so that there is no Passion so strong as Fear? Hath God given that Passion, that we might only fear Bugbears and lesser Evils, and that we should despise the great Evil, even an infinite Evil, if we may so speak? Hell is so great an Evil, that the Knowledge and Fear of it is a Kind of Antidote against it, and a notable Preservative from it. I shall give you a few Motives to enforce the Exhortation.

But before I name them, I exhort all that are out of Christ to fear Hell: It is he alone that delivers from the Wrath to come, and from the Fears of that Wrath. I exhort all the Wicked to fear Hell, *the Wicked shall be turned into Hell, Psal. ix. 17*. I exhort all habitual Practisers of Vice, all Prayerless Folk, to fear Hell. Ye that do not pray in your Families,

Families, do ye know who is your Chaplain? Why, it is even the Prophet *Jeremiah*, and what does he pray for you, and for your Families? Read it, *Jer. x, 25. Pour out thy Fury on the Heathen that know thee not, and on the Families that call not upon thy Name.* I exhort all that are unjust and cheat their Neighbours, all that are profane, that deny a God-Head, that deny Divine Revelation, that are not now convinced by the Light, ye shall, ere long, be convinced by the Fire. *Fear him that can kill Soul and Body, and cast them both into Hell-fire; O! I say, fear him.* And to enforce the Exhortation,

1. Consider the manifold Titles ye have to Hell; Hell is yours, if I may speak so, by a Natural Title: For, by Nature ye are Heirs of Wrath, and the just God will give you your Inheritance, and ye shall not want what ye are Heirs unto; ye have a Right to Hell by your own repeated Transgressions, *the Wages of Sin is Death*: Ye work for your Wages, and God will not deny them. Ye have a Right to Hell, and a Title to Damnation, by your rejecting the Author of Eternal Salvation, that is, an offered Christ, and an offered Righteousness: And I can assure you, God will give you what is yours: Hell is yours, upon that Threefold Account, and God will not deny you your own, no, not at all.

2. Consider what it is I bid you fear, it is Hell: I told you some Things about it, but
here,

here consider the *Eternity* of it; it is *Eternal*: I shall not enter into a Metaphysical or Philosophical Notion of dividing Time or Duration, into lesser and lesser Parts till ye come to an indivisible Point: But the Extremity of the Torment of the Damned in Hell makes a close Application of Thought to all these Parts, for that every Minute appears like a very Eternity. The prodigious Sensation of a separated Soul, applying every Bit of the Duration to it self! Yea, the vast Capacity of the Understanding of the Damned brings forward the whole Futurity of Torment, and brings it to every Moment, and looks even to that, which is not yet come, and, as it were, views at once what is a coming, and brings it, as it were, to a Feeling of every Part of the Duration. Words cannot express it! Thoughts cannot conceive of it! and yet do ye think it an easy State? O fear it! O tremble before it! *Who can dwell with devouring Fire, and with everlasting Burnings! Our God is a consuming Fire.*

3. Consider the Certainty of it. Will ye trust God's Word? Will ye trust God's Oath? He has sworn, that he will destroy the Wicked, he has solemnly sworn by himself, that there is no Peace to the Wicked; *I have sworn in my Wrath, that they shall never enter into my Rest, Psal. xev. 11.* There is nothing more certain than

than Hell, tho', alas! nothing less practically believed.

4. Consider Hell is a Thing that can very hardly be shunn'd; the Way to it is broad, and many enter. *Many are called, and few are chosen. I will take you one of a City, and two of a Family, and will bring you to Zion: Few in Comparison of the damned World.*

Now, I come to give you a few Directions. O! say ye, I cannot think upon lying in the Pit for ever, and to be eternally separated from him, without any Possibility of Recovery, to lose all Hope, and for ever and ever to be with the Devils, and to be hating God! O! what shall I do to be delivered? I wish there were more of this, in order to beget more of a Law-work; and that there were more preaching of Terror to secure Sinners, and telling them, *Tribulation and Anguish to every Soul that doth Evil; that knowing the Terrors of the Lord we might perswade Men,*

But if ye would escape Hell, then, 1, Lay hold on him that delivers from the Wrath to come: That we Ministers must never omit, even to send you to Christ for all. Christ has drunken up all the Hells of the Elect, and has not left so much as a Drop of Vengeance for them; they may have the Smell of the Cup, but the Cup of Law-Vengeance it self, and all the Curses due to the Elect, were prest down in a Cup, shaken together, heaped up,
and

and running over with Millions of Talents of Wrath, which the Son of God had a holy Aversion unto, yet he drank it : The whole Ocean of Wrath is drunk up now, and he has made the Way passable to Eternal Life. Lay hold on him, and fly from the Wrath to come, with all Haste and Expedition ; ye cannot be too speedy in fleeing into Christ's Bosom, to his pierced Side and Heart.

2. If ye would escape eternal Fire, ye must have an eternal Fire of Love to Christ burning in your Breasts. Chymists speak of two Fires that will not mingle together ; whatever be of that, sure I am it is here, the Flame of Love to Christ, and the Flame of Hell will never mingle together. It is your Security, next to the Blood of God, that extinguishes the Fire of Hell : I say, it is your Security, as a Mean, to have your Hearts full of Seraphick Love unto the great Mediator. Never fear Hell, if ye can say, There is a Love-fire come out of Heaven, and burns for ever upon the Altar of my Soul.

3. Get the King's Remission and Indemnity. O ! how great is the Condescension of God this Way ! An Earthly King would be thought to have been very favourable and gracious, if he had sent an Indemnity unto a Criminal or Malefactor, but it would be a Favour and Honour beyond all Expression, if he send the Prince, the apparent Heir of the
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Crown, with the Indemnity to the Traitor. But what think ye of the King's eldest and only Son to go up the Ladder, and when the Rope is about the Traitor's Neck, for him, to produce his Father's Pardon, take away the Rope from the Man's Neck, bring him down from the Scaffold, set him in the Imperial Chair, or Chair of State, and Crown him, and make him a Prince? Can any Thing parallel this unrival'd Honour and Favour? This is the Case between God and Sinners; he not only pardons the Traitor, but he sends his Son to deliver him, and to Crown him, and to confer all Marks of Honour upon him: O! Sirs, with your whole Souls embrace the King's Indemnity.

4. Lay hold on eternal Life; it is in your View, it is in your Offer: Eternal Life comes to your Door, lay hold on it, grip to it, and let never a Devil in Hell, nor a Lust make you lose your Hold again. O lay hold upon Eternal Life! And this brings me to the other Part of the Text, *viz. The Gift of God is eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

We have here the Designation that the Happiness of the Lord's People gets; it is a Life, everlasting Life, he commands this Blessing, *even Life for evermore.* Look to the moving impulsive Cause, and it is of Grace, this Life is a meer Gift: Ye see how the Apostle changes his Way of speaking, he says,
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the Wages of Sin is Death, but he does not say, *the Wages of good Works is eternal Life*, but *the Gift of God*. It is meer Donation, the Royal Bounty, Divine Liberality that confers this Life. And then we have the meritorious Cause, which is the Lord Jesus Christ. *Soci-nians*, when they read of Freedom from Hell, and Pardon of Sin, O! say they, *that excludes Christ's Merit; for how can it be free, that is so well paid for?* But we say, The Freedom, with respect to us, never excludes that: God himself provided the Remedy, and it is he that did all for us.

From the Words take this Proposition, *That there is a future Happiness reserved for Believers.*

Divines speak of the *Four last Things*, viz. *Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell*, and they make a Collection of the various Epithets and Designations these Things get in the Word of God, which indeed is a proper Method in opening the Nature of them, and therefore I shall give you some of the main Epithets which the Bible gives to this future Glory which is reserved for Believers, and which may help to explain and unfold something of the Nature of this Eternal Life here spoken of. 2. I shall give you some Arguments, to prove the Certainty of a future Happiness that is in Reserve for Believers. 3. Give you some of the Ingredients of that Happiness.

As to the *First*, Let us consider some of these sweet Denominations it gets in Scripture, and every one of them is full of Comfort to a Believer. We shall begin with the Name it gets in the Text.

1. It is called *Eternal Life*. Life is a mysterious Thing, and so indeed is Heaven. O the immensely vast Reserve of Glory in the other World! We cannot know it: Eye cannot see, Ear cannot hear, the Heart cannot conceive of it. The Eye of Man has seen a great many Things; The Traveller talks of having seen Mountains of Chrystal, Rocks of Diamonds, and the like; but never any saw the Happiness that is in Reserve for the People of God. The Ear has heard many Things, pleasant Sounds, exquisite Melody; but the Ear of Man never heard the accented Hallelujahs of the higher House. The Conception of Man will go beyond all that ever he could learn by Sense. Imagination can conceive, that God can make a better World than this; but it never enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive of what God has laid up for them that love him; the most exalted *Idea* that even Faith and Revelation can give, falls infinitely short of the superlative Excellency of the Thing it self: No, we cannot conceive of it, we but lisp and stammer, when we speak of the Things of the other World. However, the Bible has furnish'd us with some Thoughts which

which have helped to bring in the Knowledge of some Things concerning it: Here it is called *Life*, not only because it is mysterious, but it is called *Life* in Opposition to Hell, which is Death. Life is a Self-active Thing; *Aristotle* did not know what Life is, but gives a very imperfect Account of it from the Effects, and not from the Nature of it. Modern Philosophers give a truer View of it, when they tell us, That Life is so complex a Thing, that one Notion cannot be common to all: So the Life of the Insect and Animal is one, the Life of the Soul another, the Life of the Angel another, and the Life of God himself is distinct from them all; but there is something of Self-action in every Life: And ye must not imagine that Heaven is a State of Idleness, no, they are busier at Work there, than ever they were upon Earth: A glorified Saint will do more Work in Heaven in an Hour, than he did all his Period of Duration in a World all the Time he lived here. It is a *Life* there, where the most perfect Faculties exercising their highest and utmost Vigour, do terminate their chief Operations upon their most proper Objects. It is *Life*, even *Life* for evermore.

2. It is called *God's House*: O what a sweet Word is that! *In my Father's House are many Mansions*, John xiv. 2. Christ is telling his Disciples that he was going to leave them,

and they are sinking with Discouragement ; as if their troubled Hearts would have suggested such Words as these, ‘What ? Is this the End of our coming unto thee ? Of our leaving our Parents, abandoning the World, and following after thee with so many Circumstances of Worldly Loss and Trouble, and now thou art going to leave us alone. Yea, says he, my Father longs for me, and I even long to go Home ; but trust me, I will not forget you, for I am going home upon your Errand, *I go to prepare a Place for you ;* I assure you, ye shall have Room enough, for, *in my Father’s House are many Mansions.* Your Dwellings here are but flitting Tabernacles, but above, there is a fixed Residence for ever. Ye shall dwell in the same House with me, I shall be your Husband, and ye my Spouse ; I will be your King, and ye my Subjects, and we shall live in one House together : I am your Master and ye are my Servants, and where I am, there shall my Servant be. Ye have a Home, it is the same that I have ; there is a Familiarity betwixt us in that House, it is my Father’s House, and a House that is a Palace. O ! what a lofty and august Description does the Apostle *John* give of that Palace, *Rev. xxi.* It was every Way square, like a Cube or Dye, which holds forth the Immoveableness of that State ; for a Globe touching but in a Point moves easily upon a Plain,

Plain, but a Cube cannot do so. The City was Four-square, and it had Twelve Foundations, that is, well built, and hath a sure Basis, and all of precious Stones: That is the House, there is the Palace, and that is the State that is provided for Believers.

3. It is called a State of *Peace*; *they shall enter into Peace*, Isa. lvii. 2. It is a sweet Way of speaking of Heaven to call it by the Name of *Peace*; when a Man is brought out of a State of Enmity to a State of Reconciliation with God by Conversion, then Peace enters into him; but when he goes to Heaven he enters into Peace. It is much more for us to be swallowed up in an Ocean of Water, than to have a Drop coming into our Mouths; Reconciliation with God in Time brings a little Peace to us, but when we die, we are swallowed up with Peace, a Region of uninterrupted profound Tranquillity. The middle Region of the Air is all full of the Matter of Storms, there are the Treasures of Snow, Hail and Lightning, the Matter of the most dreadful Thunder is there; but if ye were above that, there is a perfect Calm. So, Believers, if ye were above, ye will enter into Peace; ye have no Quiet now, the Devil disturbs your Peace, indwelling Sin makes you roar, and the Wicked of the World disquiet you; but then ye shall enter into Peace, and never be troubled with these any more.

4. It is called *Rest*, *Heb. iv. 9. There remains therefore a Rest for the People of God.* I remember *Aristotle*, through his gross Ignorance in Philosophy, says, That all Motion tends to Rest: He had just the Vulgar Notion of the ignorant Mob, who spake so, because they saw Bodies that moved, at length left their Motion; whereas it is now demonstrable, that a Body moving would move for ever, if Circum-ambient Bodies did not take the Motion from it; and some have really made a Body move for many Hours by one single Whirle. But whatever be the Mistake of *Aristotle* in Point of Philosophy, as to Motion, it is good Divinity here, to say, That all the Believers Motion tends to Rest, and centers in Rest: All the Tossings and Wanderings, all the Pilgrimage of his People, they terminate and land in Rest. *There remains therefore a Rest for the People of God.* They would fain have their Rest here; No, says their wise Father, that is not your Interest, your Rest is reserved for you in another World; arise, this is not your Rest.

5. This future State of Believers is called Joy, the Joy of the Lord. O! it is a lofty Expression we have, *Matth. xxv. 21, 23. Well done good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord:* Intellectual Joy is a great Part of the proper formal Happiness of Heaven. The *Epicurean's* sensual Pleasure, his
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dreggy Delight, and criminal Joy, is unworthy of a Man: But this intellectual Joy, arising from the Knowledge of God above, is our Happiness. Yea, but what Joy is the Joy of the Lord? If we may speak so, it is Joy of the same Kind that God has, it is the Joy of the Lord. O who can think or speak of this Bless! The very entering into it is accompanied with inexpressible Joy, as *Psal. xlv. 15. With Gladness and Rejoicing shall they be brought: They shall enter into the King's Palace*; that is a great deal of Joy. We see a poor Believer toss'd with the Pangs of Death, and upon the setting Point of his Life he is groaning, being oppress'd with Pain and Sickness; but could ye see him shooting the Gulf, and going home to his Father's House, you would see him exulting full of Joy. If Faith give us unspeakable Joy, and if, in believing, we rejoice with Joy unspeakable, what will not the Sight do? What will the entering upon the full Possession do? *Christ shall present you faultless* (saith *Jude*, Ver. 24---) *before the Presence of his Glory with exceeding Joy*, rapturous Joy, the Joy of the Lord. O! ye have had much Sorrow in your Time; ye have been *Men of Sorrow, and acquainted with Grief*; ye have been tossed with Tempest, and not comforted, or ye have been very few Days without some Grief or Sorrow: But now begins your Joy, and it shall never have an End. The Re-
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deemed shall come to *Zion* with everlasting Joy upon their Heads; they shall obtain Gladness, and Sorrow and Sighing shall flee away, that is, shall not only leave them, but they will be very glad to be quit of them, and therefore are said to flee away: Sighing and Sorrow flees away, and there is no more Mourning, no more Crying, no more Death, *but the Lamb will wipe away all Tears from their Eyes.* Yea, they were once such Mourners, that all the Angels in Heaven could not dry their Cheeks: Let every *Seraph*, and every *Cherub* come down from Heaven with Napkins in their Hands, they could not dry the Believers Cheeks; yea, that is the Prerogative of Christ, the Lamb, he it is that wipes away all Tears from his Peoples Eyes, and they enter into the Joy of their Lord.

6. This State is frequently exprest by *Glory*; Christ enter'd into his Glory, and Believers enter into Glory. What is Glory? It is Excellency made conspicuous; it is perfect Happiness, and the Brightness of a Thing. The Glorified above have both Subjective, Objective, and Circumstantial Glory. They have subjective Glory, in that their Holiness is consummate and perfect, and this makes them all glorious within, and that is their internal Glory. They behold the Glory of God, the Glory of his Perfections, the Shining of his glorious Attributes, and that is their objective Glory;

Glory; and they enter into a Possession of it, a Sight of it, a Fruition of it. The Place is glorious, all the Riches of the Nations are brought into it: The Earth is but a Dreg, a Sediment; we want Words to express the Vileness and Baseness of the Earth, if compared with the Heavens above: *I saw no Sun there, (says John) but the Lord God and the Lamb were the Light thereof.* There is the Light, there is the Glory of an incarnate God-head. That glorious Sun in the Heavens, which is reckoned more than Eight score Times bigger than this Earth, is an immensely vast Ocean of created Glory; yea, but it is but a dark Clod of Earth, if compared with the glorious Light above, the Inhabitants are glorious, the Work and all are glorious! O Sirs, this is a sweet Subject.

7. It is called a *Kingdom*. *Fear not, little Flock, it is your Father's good Will to give you the Kingdom.* Luke xii. 32. O! a Kingdom is the very Top of created Felicity; Men reckon it the highest Pitch of Happiness they can attain unto upon Earth. What Battels, what Insurrections, what Invasions, what Treasons and Blood-shed have been for the Gaining a little Kingdom! To disinherit the righteous Heir, and bring a Papist to the Throne; Men would shed more Blood, to get their Wills in that: But what are all these Kingdoms of the whole World to the Kingdom of God in Heaven

ven. *Seneca* the Moralist imagin'd himself to be standing in the Sun, or in some fixed Star, and looking down again, he cannot see this Earth, that little dark Point, which Men call the World; and when he could not see it at all, he cries out, *O mad and foolish Men, that confine their Desires to this little Point.* Men are just like so many Ants, that imagine a Ridge of Land to be a World, and every Mole-hill to be a Kingdom, and they fight for it; and when they get an Inch, they think they gain half a Kingdom: Such is the Madness of Men! But here is a Kingdom that cannot be moved, here is the Imperial Crown put upon their Heads, here they sit upon the Throne with him, here they have the Robe Royal put on them, and a Proclamation made before them, Thus it is done to the Man, the Woman, whom the King delighteth to honour. It is very extraordinary to see a King make a King of a Subject; for a Monarch cannot bear with a Rival. But every Subject here is a King, he hath made us unto God Kings and Priests.

8. It is called the *third Heaven*; *I was caught up into the third Heaven*, says Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 2, The Air is the *first Heaven*, the Starry Heaven, where the Sun and Moon are, that is the *second Heaven*; and above all these the Imperial Heavens, where God dwells in Majesty and Glory, that is the *third Heaven.* And, who

who hath measured the Heavens ? Hell is said to be very large ; but Heaven is many Millions of Times larger : We cannot see the Boundaries of the highest Heavens, that great and vast Habitation, where the Lamb leads them, and they follow him through this great Region of Glory, *They follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes.*

9. It is frequently called *Paradise* ; so *Paul*, in the 4th *Verse* of that forecited Chapter, says, he was taken up into *Paradise* ; *Paradise* was the most beautiful Spot of the lower Creation. Indeed, the whole Earth, before the Fall, was a *Paradise* ; but this was the best Part of this *Paradise*. We will not enter upon the ridiculous Notions that some Men have about the Place where it was ; for, where-ever it was, it was the Garden of God. 'Tis true, all was his ; but this was his, in a more peculiar Manner, as it was a Compend of all worldly Pleasure, and a Model of all earthly Perfection : And to this Heaven is compar'd. In the midst of this *Paradise* of God, is the Tree of Life, and the very Leaves of it are Medicinal for a diseased World ; it bears twelve Manner of Fruits, and yields its Fruit every Month, which makes, as it were, an Hundred and four and forty Cropts in a Year. There the mellow Apples of the Tree of Life are their food, and they drink of the River of Life : The four Rivers that took their Rise from the River that

that went out of *Eden* to water the Garden, were all a Representation of this River of Life. Believers have the Promise that they shall drink of that River of Pleasure; and a River of Pleasures is an odd Phrase.

10. And, *Lastly*, It is called *Salvation*. He became the Author of eternal Salvation unto all them that obey him. Heb. v. 9. It is not only a privative Salvation, by a Deliverance from Hell; but a positive Salvation, by setting them in a State of Happiness, saving from all Evil; the Body is saved not only from these Diseases, that were the Consequents of the Fall; but from the Infirmities that would have attended the innocent Animal Nature, tho' *Adam* had never sinned. There is a Deliverance from all these purchased by him, who is the Author of eternal Salvation.

The *second* Thing I propos'd to speak unto, was, to give you some Arguments to prove the Certainty of a future State of Happiness reserved for the Lord's People; and, at present, I shall only offer you the following Considerations.

1. Consider, the whole Scripture is so express, that we must deny our Bible, if we deny this. The *Socinians* indeed say, That there is no express Word in the old Testament concerning Heaven; but they have not read the Bible, who say so; for we have it very expressly, *Psal. xvi. 11. In thy Presence is Fulness of Joy, and at thy Right Hand there are Pleasures for ever-*

evermore. And, *Psal. xlv. 15. With Gladness and Rejoicing shall they be brought, they shall enter the King's Palace.* And, *Psal. lxxiii. 24. Thou shalt guide me with thy Counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory.* And, *Dan: xii. 2. And many of them that sleep in the Dust of the Earth, shall awake, some to everlasting Life, and some to Shame and everlasting Contempt.* Where it is said, *Many of them that sleep shall awake.* By the many, we are to understand the whole Race of *Adam*, a Multitude, there, is taken for the Whole. This Doctrine is proposed so categorically in Scripture, that it is impossible to decline the Force of its Arguments. So, in the New Testament, *1 Cor. xv. 58. Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, for as much as ye know, that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord.* And, *Rev. ii. 10. — Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.* And so Paul applies it to himself, and every Believer, *2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. I have fought the good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that Day; and not to me only, but to all them also that love his Appearing.*

2. Consider the Mixture of Providences, and continual Vicissitudes of Dispensations, how very often the Wicked prosper more than the Godly. When we see the Wicked prosperous,
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and the Godly afflicted and persecuted, we are ready to think this to be a Crook in Providence, but God will right it; and that which seems crooked, will be made straight, by giving a Heaven to the afflicted Believer, and a Hell to the prosperous Wicked, Remember, *Dives, Thou in thy Lifetime hadst thy good things, and Lazarus evil things: But now, thou art tormented, and he is comforted.* Now, there is the crooked like Thing made straight again. Who would have looked to *Joseph*, considering his Innocence, his Holiness, and beheld him hated by his Brethren, going to be murdered by them, and actually sold by them; and, for his Integrity and Chastity, to be cast into Prison, and the Irons entering his Soul, he would have thought, O! what a strange like Providence is that? But wait till the last Act, and see the last Scene, and there the *Hero* appears, and is the greatest Man, next to *Pharaoh*, in all *Egypt*. Look again to our Lord Jesus Christ, in what Circumstances he lived and died: But wait till he rise again, wait till he ascend above. And so it is here, ye must wait till the last Scene open, and then it will appear, and look favourably toward his People, when he gives them eternal Life.

3. Consider, God has taken a peculiar Relation and Designation to himself, with Respect to his People, when he says, *I am their God.* Our Lord Jesus Christ takes an Argument

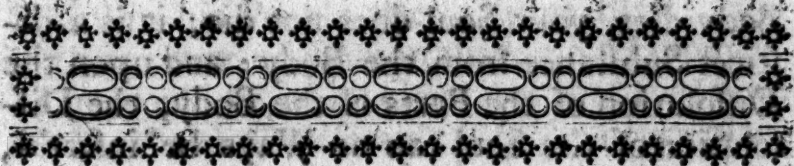
ment for the Resurrection from this, that no Man, nay, perhaps, nor Angel, could have thought on. *Do ye not know*, says he to the Sadducees, *that he calls himself the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, even after they were dead; they were his; and he was their God; they must then live: He cannot be the God of the Dead, but of the Living.* And the Apostle to the Hebrews, Chap. xi. 16. gives a notable and excellent Commentary on this; He gives unto them a better Country than that which they left, speaking of the Patriarchs, he gives them a City, a Country, a Kingdom, *Wherefore he is not ashamed to be called their God.* O! it is strong Logick: The Fulness of the Expression, the great Extent and Comprehensiveness of the Relation of being YOUR GOD cannot be fill'd up, cannot be answer'd, except he give you a Heaven, and nothing less. He gave *Abraham* Riches, he gave *Abraham* a numerous Seed; but these will not fill up the Meaning of that Relation, of which he is not ashamed, viz. to be called their God; and therefore he gives them a Kingdom, and there lies the Force of the Argument.

4. Consider the Immortality of the Soul; the Believer's Soul is immortal, and we cannot conceive or imagine, without a Contradiction to all the Attributes of God, that he will keep the Souls of his People alive for ever;

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and yet keep them miserable. The Soul cannot die; that is to say, it cannot cease to be, or to exist: There is no other Way a Spirit can die, except in a spiritual Sense, by the Diseases of Sin: But we speak now in a Physical Sense: For the Soul of Man is a most simple, uncompounded, undivided Being: What makes any Creature on Earth to be destroyed in a natural Way? It is either from corrupt Principles in the Nature of it, from jarring Elements, contrary Qualities, or it is some external Force that does it. Now, from none of these is the Soul of Man a Subject capable of Anihilation: We have not an Instance, since the Creation, that ever God did annihilate one Drop of Water, or a Grain of Sand; and there is no Reason can be given to make it probable, that he will annihilate the Soul, but that he shall preserve it by a constant conserving Power. So that the Soul is immortal; and if the Soul be immortal: Then the Souls of his People cannot but be happy. He will never keep in Life the Soul of one that loves him, delights in him, suffers for him, cleaves to him, and adheres to his Ways; he will not, I say, keep that Soul in Life, and suffer it to live in Misery: And therefore he will say, *Come, and inherit the Kingdom prepared for you.* The Lord give you the Faith, and well grounded Hope of Eternal Life.



S E R M O N. V.

ROMANS vi. 23.

But the Gift of God is Eternal Life, &c.

WHEN great Men have a Mind to express the Largesses of their Bounty, they give Gifts worthy of their Character: A King will not give you an Half Penny; for that were a mocking of himself, as well as of you. So, when God has a Mind to shew forth the Riches of his Grace, he is very liberal, and with an Heroick Munificence, he gives a Gift worthy of himself, he gives eternal Life; *the Gift of God is eternal Life.*

We left at the Heads of Arguments, whereby we prove there is an eternal Life, and a future Happiness: We did not go through all the Arguments; and therefore take two or three more, before we proceed to another Head.

1. The Soul of Man is immortal, and survives the Body ; that is to say, When your Body dies, your Soul does not die ; it is a distinct Substance from the Body ; and upon the Dissolution of the Parts of the Body, the Dissolution of the Soul can no Ways be infer'd, no more than it can follow, that when a Cage is broken, the Bird must die ; for there is no Union betwixt the Bird and the Cage, they are distinct Beings, distinct Substances. When the Ship is broken, the Crew may be alive. Where there are distinct Beings, they are separable ; and the Being of the one does not depend on the other. The Soul of Man, if we would go through the Properties of it, the Attributes of it, the Acts of it, is a quite other Substance than the Body is : And so, the Life of the Body is one Kind of Life, and the Life of the Soul is of another Kind, which we cannot well conceive of. Now, is against all the Attributes of God, to make them that love him, delight in him, hope in his Promises, do all, and suffer all for him, to make them miserable, after he has given them the Promises of eternal Life : So, that if we join Reason and Revelation together, there is certainly a Happiness and a Reward reserved for the Righteous.

2. The Souls of all Men have a Thirst after Immortality, after Happiness, and a happy Immortality ; the worst of Men would live, and be happy for ever ; a vile Wizzard, a covetous

vetous *Balaam* has a passionate Wish, *Num. xxiii. 10. Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my last End be like his.* There is also a Thirst in his People after a future Bless; and if there were no Immortality, no Happiness, Man would be, of all Creatures that ever God made, the most miserable; for he never planted in any living Creature Appetites, but where he prepares Objects to gratify these Appetites: So, every Insect has its Appetite, and God prepares Food, and other Things suitable for that Appetite. Now, if there were no Heaven, no future Life, the Godly, of all Men, would be the most Miserable; for they have the greatest Thirst after Happiness; and if in this Life we had only Hope in Christ Jesus, we were, of all Men most miserable. What Torment did the Heathen Philosophers find from a Thirst after Bless and Happiness, when they were ignorant of the true Nature of that Bless; they had a great and vehement Desire after Happiness, and yet they could not tell where it lay, nor, wherein it consisted; and it was observed, that they had about 280 Opinions concerning Man's Happiness.

3. There is not only a Thirst after Happiness, but Believers have a proleptick Taste of it, they feel it, and there comes a Crumb from the higher Table above in Heaven, where *Abraham* is sitting, and Believers get it here, the Bread of Life, the Tree of Life, some

Views of God; whereby they have, as it were, a Prelude of eternal Happiness; they have the Beginnings of it, the Initials of it, they are seal'd unto it, they have the Earnest of that Happiness; and shall they be depriv'd of the Thing it self?

But we come now to speak to the third Head propos'd in the Method, which is, to give you some of the Ingredients of this Happiness. All the Epithets we formerly spoke of, they are some Way expressive of the Nature of the Thing; and, no Doubt, ye have at other Times heard of some of the Ingredients I am now to speak of; but the Subject being Heaven, and the Believer's future Happiness, it should never be too Stale or nauseous, to any who is longing for it, or living in the Expectation of the full Enjoyment of it.

First then, This eternal Life in the Text consists in the immediate Sight of God, the Scripture is express about it: *Blessed are the pure in Heart, Why so Blessed? Why so happy? For they shall see God: Where I am, there shall my Servant be, and shall see my Glory.* Thomas Aquinas, the great School-Man, he would have the Sight of God to be the Whole of Man's Happiness. Scotus, who was a direct Antagonist to, a profess'd Enemy, and the very Reverse of Thomas, and Antipode to him in all Things, says, *That Happiness lies in the Act of Love*: But we may reconcile them, by saying,
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It lies in both; that is, in the *seeing* of God, and in the *loving* of him, *Psal. xvii. 15. As for me, I will behold thy Face in Righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy Likeness.* God throws all the Vails aside, and then it is immediate Vision of him in Heaven, which is a chief Branch of eternal Life. How far it is immediate, with Respect to the Sight of God's Essence, we cannot tell you, but we mean, that it is not by Faith and Revelation; it is not by any Means, no, It is God's Presence, in a very enlarged Understanding, as, when I see a Thing with mine Eyes that is present, it is in my immediate View. We know somewhat of God here, by the Light of Nature; they knew him under the old Testament, by his sometimes assuming a Body; we know him incarnate in Christ Jesus; they know him above, in the Light of Glory, the Lattises are away, and all the Glasses remov'd, and they see him Face to Face.

2. This Sight of God, wherein eternal Life consists; as it is immediate, so it is called comprehensive; but we do not mean thereby, that they can have an adequate Knowledge of God, so, as thereby to exhaust his whole Essence and Perfections; for that is wholly impossible, we may as well, yea, more easily gather the whole Ocean in a Nut Shell, as the Mind of Man, which is a finite, bounded, circumscrib'd and narrow Thing, can take in

the whole Essence of God. But we call it comprehensive ; that is to say, perfect, if compared with the scanty Measure of Knowledge we have of him here : We shall know him, as we are known ; and that is a very odd Word, 1 John iii. 2. — *For we shall see him as he is.* The Glorified get a Sight of what God is, a View of his Attributes, great and august Discoveries of the infinite Perfections of that God, a View of his Decrees : And there the Mysteries that were so confounding to dark Souls on Earth, will be all brightly displayed : A View of his Works, the Believer will have the Knowledge of the Philosophy of the Creation ; Men spend their whole Time in the Study of Nature, and after all their Pains, can know but little : But a new glorified Saint, the youngest Infant that is but just come to God's World, and knows nothing here but the Breast, shall have more Philosophy and Knowledge the very first Moment it goes to Heaven, than all the Naturalists here could ever attain unto. And a Believer will see the Works of Providence ; there are new and surprising Scenes discovering and opening for them. And, O ! it will be a large Province, to take a View of what God has done from the first Moment. He made a World to the Moment he burnt it up like a Witch. The Ways of God with every Saint, the Ways of God with themselves, from the Moment of their Conception,

to the Day of their Death, the Experiences of his Way, of his (many Times) hid and dark Way, were Things they could give no Reason for, while here; but there he will satisfy them to the full, with a full, clear, and distinct View of all his Ways.

3. This Eternal Life consists in a *Sight* that is *appropriating*; the Man sees much of God, and he can say, All that he sees is his own, this is MY GOD, and MY ALL. The Attributes of God are *mine*, the Persons of the God-head are *mine*, his Decrees are *mine*, his Works are *mine*; yea, all he is is *mine*. A Traveller sees the Palace of a great King, he sees his Gardens, he sees his great Attendants, Riches and Honours. Well, he sees all these with some kind of Admiration and Pleasure; Yea, but the young Prince that is to be Heir to all these Things, he sees them with another View; because he can say, All that I see is *mine*. So is it with the glorified Soul, he can say, the Whole of God is *mine*. *Luther* was wont to say, *The Sweetness of Religion lies in Pronouns, and especially in that Possessive My*: When we challenge a Propriety in a good Thing, it makes it sweet and pleasant; if it were but a Bird, or any little Thing, how much more my Wife, my Children, my Estate? But to see God, as their own God, and to say, My God, my All, how affecting must that Appropriation be! It is a vast Claim indeed,
for

for a Shell of Dust, that might have been crushed before the Moth, a Shell of Dust baked and knead together with the Venom of Hell, to be purg'd, and to be made a Star above, and to look unto God, and say, *He is all mine.* This Happiness lies in an appropriating Vision.

4. It is a transforming Sight the Saints have in Heaven; that is, the Sight of him makes them like him. We have a Scripture often cited to this Purpose, 2 Cor. iii. 18. *But we all with open Face, beholding, as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Let a Black look upon a fair Virgin all his Life, it will never make him fair; let us look upon the beautiful Sun, it will not make us comely, it will tawn and discolour us the more: But the more we see a God, we are the liker unto him; by beholding his Wisdom, we are made Wise; by looking on his Holiness, we are made holy; and, by a Discovery of his Power, we are made Mighty, and transformed into the same Image: As the Beams of a Meridian Sun falling upon a Globe of Gold, the Globe reflects the Rays of the Sun, and so becomes a little Sun it self; so it is by looking on the Glory of God in Heaven, the glorified are all made glorious. We have an Instance, of the Influence of the Sight of God upon Man, in *Moses*, he is forty Days
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conversing with God, and when he comes down, his Face shone with such a peculiar Lustre and confounding Brightness, that they could not look upon him, till he behov'd to veil his Face. So above, they all see him, and, by their seeing him, are made like unto him. *We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* That is strange Divinity, and strange Logick!

5. This View, which is a Part of Eternal Life, it is a steady Sight, a steady View of God. It is the Mischief and Misery of Saints on Earth, they do not get a long View of God, they do not see him much, but their Eyes are presently turned away to behold Vanity. Christians, for most part, are like the Lark, she mounts and towers up, as if she would pierce the Skies, and hide her self among the Clouds, and within a few Minutes she is sitting upon a Clod of Earth, and there she rests: So here, the believing Man and Woman are seeing God, and conversing with him by Faith, and within Half an Hour they are Carnal and Worldly, and their Eyes and Imaginations are following after Vanity. But above, the glorious Sight arrests them for ever, so as they have no Power to turn away again; their Eyes are steady, arrested, and chain'd with the superlative Excellency of the Object: They can never weary there; no, there are new Scenes opening continually there.

6. A Part of Heaven and Eternal Life consists in the blessed Vision, or in that Sight that makes blessed. I rather give you this Word, than the School-word *Beatific*, which some alledge to be neither good Latin, nor good O-ratory. Our Sight is the Formal Bless, and makes us more happy. *We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* It is a satisfying Sight, and satiates the whole Desires: The Desires of Man are very large, the Faculties are widened, so as Ten Worlds cannot satisfy one Desire of an immortal Soul. The Cravings of a Spirit are very great; but here, all it can desire, all it can wish for is given, and this makes them happy. *Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us,* saith Philip, *John xiv. 8,* There they get full Satisfaction, and this makes them blessed. *Blessed are they, for they shall see God;* that Vision makes them blessed indeed.

But then, our future Happiness consists in perfect Love to God, in the Activity of the Will and Affections, as well as in the Acts of the Understanding. Here is a large Field, but we must not dwell upon it. Here is the Object altogether lovely, and here is a Faculty intirely purified from all Earthlinefs; all carnal Affections are turned out of Doors, and the Will is proportion'd to the Object, and embraces it. In our Understanding, the Object comes in to us, and forms a Species, an Idea,

Idea or Likeness of it within our Minds but in Love, the Will goes out to the Object and embraces it. In Heaven there is both, that is, God entering into us, and we entering into God, and embracing him; the whole Soul is turned into a Lamp and Flame of Love, infinite Love is upon the Throne, and Flames of Love about the Throne, and incircling it, and all the Glorified swallowed up in Love, and made up of Love. There is no Faith in Heaven, there is no Hope there; nor is there any Need for the Graces of Repentance, Mortification and Patience, but Love, and Love alone fills Heaven to all Eternity.

And then, from Sight and Love, there is a Result of extreme Joy; from seeing and loving God there arises a Spring, and a Flood of Joy: When Believers get something of God here, Joy enters into them; but when they go to Heaven they enter into it; they swim there in Rivers of Pleasures. The Believer, while here, gets a Drop of Pleasure, and much Mixture of Sorrow with it; but at God's right Hand there are Rivers of Pleasure, and the Glorified are dissolved into Hallelujahs, and they have Joy unspeakable and full of Glory.

There are Two Properties of this Happiness spoken of in the Text; the First is, *That it is Eternal, Everlasting.* Another is the Freedom

dom of it, *That it is a Gift, the Gift of God.*

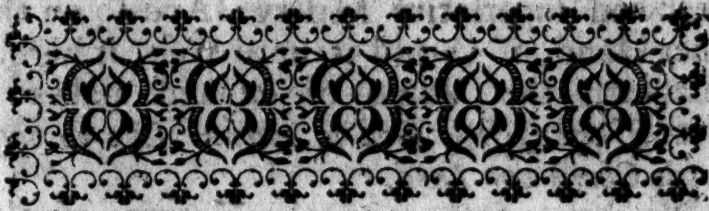
There are some Things said to be Eternal in Scripture, when they were to endure for a set stated Time and Period; so the Ceremonial Law is said to be a Statute for ever, and the *Israelites* should dwell in the Land of *Canaan* for ever; that is, for a certain Period; and taken as contradistinguished from a transient short Appearance or Continuance of Life; but this is eternal or everlasting Happiness in the most strict and proper Sense, that is, it is without any End. Ye would think Duration to be neither here or there, and that it is only an extrinsical Circumstance of a Thing, and that it doth not enter into the Nature of the Thing it self; but with respect to Happiness, it is essential unto it: For, no Man in Heaven could be compleatly happy, if he were not sure to stay there for ever. The very Thought he might lose Heaven, would be like Water among all that Wine; and therefore we are told, *That the Lord upon Mount Zion commands the Blessing, even Life for evermore.* Eternity not only speaks forth a Duration without a Period or End, without determining; but it speaks forth an equal and uniform Way of-enjoying God for ever. We know nothing of God's Eternity, it is so mysterious; for he is without Beginning and without Ending: But for the Eternal Happiness of a Soul
or

or Angel, it is just a continued Act, it is an equal and uniform Enjoyment, without Interruption, without Intermission, without Remiss or Abating of their Happiness. As in Hell there is not a Drop to cool the Tongue, so in Heaven there are Rivers of Bless, and no Want of any Thing to make them happy, it is eternal. Ye may say, Why is the Happiness of the Saints eternal? The Angels that fell were once as happy as your Saints are, and yet they left Heaven, they forfeited their Happiness; they had a Life with him indeed, but it was not Life for evermore; it was but a very short Life.

I Answer, The Reasons why the Saints Life is eternal, and the Angels that fell had not eternal Life, are these, (1.) There was an immutable Love of Election upon the Saints, which was not upon the Angels that fell. (2.) There is an Union betwixt Christ and Saints, which was not betwixt Christ and Angels; there is very much well worth our Observation in that Passage, *John xiv. 19. Because I live, ye shall live also.* It is, as if he had said, As long as I am a living God, and a living Mediator, ye shall live, and ye shall derive that Life from me by a constant uninterrupted Dependance, *because I live, &c.* Would ye have the Head all Life, and all the Members of the Mystical Body dead and rotten? Christ is the Head, the Saints are the Members of his

his Body, and because the Head lives, the Members must live also. Yea, I must say further, That there is something in the People of God, in their seeing of him in Heaven, that really fixes their Souls upon him for ever. Ye will say, Why then did not the Angels stand? I answer, The most solid Divines own, that there was something in God they did not see, which the Saints now see; and what they now see does determine their Choice, and fixes their Love by an immutable Life above; and thus they are confirmed. Ye will say, What is that? The Lord sends a constant Gale, an auspicious Wind of his Spirit upon every Grace; and therefore their Graces are everlastingly in Action, and in such vigorous Exercise, that it is impossible they can fall; so that there are a great many Causes why this Life is Eternal: Christ bought it for them, not to continue for a While only, but for ever, as the Text says, *The Gift of God is eternal Life*. The very Food, whereby this Life is maintain'd, is eternal, this Bread never perishes, this Water never perishes; and therefore all being Eternal, the Life is Eternal.

S E R.



S E R M O N VI.

R O M. vi. 23.

But the Gift of God is Eternal Life, &c.

L I F E is the greatest Perfection of a Created Being, because it comes nearest to the Divine ; for he is the living God. Considering Life in the Multiplicity of its Functions, the Variety of its Operations, the different Channels through which it is convey'd, it hath the Preheminence above all that the Material Creation can boast of. Hence it is, that Philosophers have justly determined, That the least Fly or Insect, tho' but a little Dust enlivened by the Sun, is yet more excellent than the Sun it self. But, of all Kinds of Life, Eternal Life is the best : Eternity adds a great Weight to any Thing ; if it be Misery, eternal Misery is terrible ; if

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it were but an eternal Tooth-ach, yet it is a great and superlative Misery: And so on the other Hand, if ye add it unto Life, it highly inhanceth the Value of it, and makes it great; *the Gift of God is eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

We have spoken to the Nature of this future Blessat some length, and came to the Properties of it, having begun with that in the Text, *it is Eternal*; we shall not resume what we told you last Occasion, I only suggest, That here all is eternal, and breathes forth Life; the Crown of Life it is an incorruptible Crown; the Bread of Life perishes not; the Tree of Life is ever green, flourishing and fruitful in the Midst of the Paradise of God. But to proceed,

2. This Life, this future Happiness is altogether *Free*. The *Romish* Church advances many Arguments for *Merit*, which I shall not much insist upon at the Time: We say, this invaluable Blessing is altogether Free; it is called a *Gift* in the Text, and ye know that Lawyers define a Gift to be, *that which is mine becomes thine, without any Law obliging me*. Nothing freer than this Gift: It is called an *Inheritance*. The Heir, tho' very unworthy, and tho' he has not wrought for a good Estate, yet it is convey'd to him freely by his Parents; so this eternal Life is called *the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, and frequently

quently in Scripture, all *Merit of good Works* is excluded. The essential Requisites of *Merit* are wanting in the best of our Works: For, before a Work can merit, it must *first* be our own, and we must be the Authors of it: Now, *it is God that works all good Works in us*, and it is but giving him his own, when we have done our best. If I owe Ten Thousand Millions to one, and he gives me a Halfpenny, and I give it to him back again, do I deserve a Remission of all that Debt, because I give him a very insignificant Part of what was his own? Again, *Secondly*, In *Merit* there must be a Proportion betwixt the Work and the Reward. Now, is there any Proportion betwixt a Religious Thought, a holy Performance of a Duty, and that eternal Reward above? Is there any Proportion betwixt a Look of Faith, and that blestful Vision above? Is there any Proportion betwixt dropping a Tear in Duty, and being swallowed up and dissolved in the Hallelujahs of the higher House? No, there is no Proportion at all. *Our light Affliction*, (says the Apostle, 2 Cor. iv. 17.) *which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*. And then, if we would plead *Merit*, we must give God what we did not owe him: For, if we give him what is already due, upon many other Scores we deserve nothing. Now, as our Creator, as our Preserver and Benefactor, and many other

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Ways,

Ways, he deserves and challenges our best Obedience in whatever we can do ; yea, and after we have done it, we may, and must say, *We are unprofitable Servants, we have done that which was our Duty to do*, Luke xvii. 10. In a Word, the Whole of eternal Life resolves into the free Bounty of God, and his Goodwill is the Fountain of the Donation : So our Lord teaches us, Luke xii. 32. *Fear not, little Flock, for it is your Father's good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom.* They talk to us, that Paul makes God's giving him Heaven to be an Act of Justice, and considers God as a righteous Judge when he gives him the Crown ; they found this upon these Words, 2 Tim. iv. 8. *Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that Day, &c.* But we must understand, that the Righteousness of God is sometimes taken for his Goodness and Bounty in the Old Testament : And besides, to perform his Promise is an Act of Righteousness. Indeed, the making of the Promise is a Deed of Grace, but the performing of the Promise is a Deed of Righteousness. And further, he has got a full Recompence and Price paid him for all he gives us ; he has got from our elder Brother a valuable Price, and therefore his giving it to us is an Act of Righteousness ; yea, Pardon itself is called an Act of Justice, 1 John i. 9. *If we confess our Sins, he is faithful and just to forgive*

give us our Sins. Why? Because Christ has bought the Pardon for us. But again, say they, Heaven is called a *Reward*. But it is plain there may be a *Reward of Grace*, as well as a *Reward of Debt*: For Example, a Father offers a Million of Money to his Son, if he will but lift a Straw; the Son does it, and the Father rewards the lifting of a Straw with a Million; but, Does the Work deserve it? It is a *Reward*, indeed, of what the Man did, but *there is no Merit in it*. Again, say they, they are said to be *worthy*, *Rev. iii. 4. And they shall walk with me in White, for they are worthy*. But we Answer, It is plain from the Tenor of the New Testament, that that is called *worthy*, which is fitly disposed and prepared. Accordingly, *Matth. iii. 8. it is said, Bring forth therefore Fruits meet for Repentance*: According to the *Greek* it is, *Bring forth Fruit worthy of Repentance*; and this, according to the *Popish Worth*, is Nonsense. So we have that Word, *1 Thess. ii. 12. That ye would walk worthy of God*. Do we, or can we deserve God? No, but the Meaning is, to walk suitable to the Relation we stand in to him. So that the Meaning of these Words, *They shall walk with me in White, for they are worthy*, is, they are fitted and prepared by Grace on Earth, for the Possession of Glory in Heaven. Yea, but say they, *Antiquity* is for us, for the *Fathers* spake frequently of *meriting Heaven by Works*: But we say, It

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is plain to a Demonstration, that by the *Merits* these Fathers spake of, they meant only getting or acquiring, as the Way, Mean, or instrumental Cause. For Instance, *Augustine* says of *Adam's Fall*, *O blessed and happy Fall, that deserved (meruisti) such a Redeemer!* Did *Adam's Fall* deserve a Redeemer? He deserved Hell, but no Redeemer. But that Father means, It was the Action that brought about a Redeemer, God made that an Occasion for a Redeemer.

3. A Third Property of this future Happiness and Eternal Life is, *That it is well secured.* No Man can secure an Estate to his Son; and tho' he could, he cannot secure the Life of his Son to enjoy it: But here is Security for both, we are kept through Faith, and by the Power of God; there the Heirs are preserved, and what are they preserved unto? *We are kept by Faith unto Salvation*, that is reserved in Heaven for us. The Heir is preserv'd unto an immensely vast Reserve of Glory, and that is kept for him. What Security the Promise of God can give, what Security the solemn Oath of God can give, what a Sacrament can give, or the Spirit of God can seal up; All this makes for the Security of this Life: There is no precluding of us from it, for it is well secur'd beyond the Reach of Danger.

4. This Eternal Life is a Happiness prepar'd for the Lord's People. It is said to be prepar'd,

prepar'd, (1.) In the *Decree of Election*. Some Learn'd Men call the Decree of Election, *God's preparing of Glory, and Grace as the Means to Glory*; that is, their Definition of the Decree of Election. Christ says this Life is prepared, *Matth. xxv. 34. Come ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World*; that is, from *Eternity*: For, when we go to the Beginning of Time, we then fall into an Eternity, if our Thoughts look any further back. This Happiness was prepar'd in the *Decree*. (2.) It was prepared, when Christ told down the Price, and thereby purchased this Life for them, when he died and suffered for them. It is purchased, brought about, and all the Ways of coming at it, all bought by the Blood of God: They have a Noble House, they have Mansions, many Mansions, and the Rent of all these Mansions is already paid in the melted Gold of the Blood of God: It is through Jesus Christ our Lord that we have this Life. Heaven flows in the Channel of the Blood of God unto every Believer. (3.) It was prepared when Christ ascended, and in the Name of his People took Possession of it; he took Possession of Heaven's Happiness in their Name: So that when the Soul of a Believer departs out of the Body, he comes to a well-prepar'd and furnish'd Room, which Christ has purchas'd and taken Possession of for him.

5. This Life and future Happiness is a *Holy Life*; Holiness is there in its Perfection, which is a great Part of Heaven's Happiness. Many Men live the Life of Fools, the whole of their Conduct is Folly; all their Way in the World is but one uninterrupted Piece and continued Series of Folly: Others, they live the Life of Beasts, and are drench'd in Sensuality, they are immers'd in Criminal Pleasures, and drink up greedily the Dreg of Beasts: Other some live the Life of Devils, such as the *Deist*, the *Atheist*, and the *prophane Blasphemer*. But above, there is a *Life of Holiness*; there all the Graces of the Spirit are amass'd together, and are raised up to their highest Pitch and Vigour of exalted Perfection.

6. It is a *complete Happiness*, and that both in the Negative and Positive Parts of it. In the Negative, the Man is delivered from all Evil; there is nothing like Evil in Heaven: He is delivered from Tears, *he will weep no more*. He has many Times *watered his Couch with his Tears*, and mingled his Drink with Weeping; but then *Sighing and Sorrow shall flee away*; he is delivered from Fears, the *Voice of Oppression is no more heard*; he is delivered from Sin, indwelling Sin is pull'd up by the Roots, and thrown over the Wall, and these *Egyptians* who so often plagued them, they shall see them no more. There is not a *Paul* in Heaven complaining of a *Body of Death*; there

there is a Deliverance from all Sicknesſes and Diſeaſes; the Inhabitants of that Land ſhall not ſay they are ſick, for their *Iniquities are forgiven them*; they are delivered from Perſecution, *there, the Wicked ceaſe from Troubling,* and *there, the Weary are at Reſt*; they are delivered from Natural Neceſſities, *they ſhall hunger no more, they ſhall thirſt no more, the Lamb ſhall lead them to Rivers of living Waters*; they are delivered from the Devil, he will tempt no more, his long Arms will not reach the Imperial Heavens to pull down one of theſe Stars thence; no, they are fixed and above, and beyond his Reach for ever. And then, on the other Hand, as to the Poſitive Part of their Happineſs, they have all the poſitive Bleſſings I formerly touch'd at. There are three great Allurements among Men that engage and draw their Affections; there is *Proſit, Pleaſure and Honour*, and all theſe in a ſupereminent Manner are found in Heaven above: For *Proſit*, the very Streets of the City are *paſſ'd with transparent Gold*, they bring the Riches of the Nations into it, and the Foundations of the City are precious Stones, Rev. xxi. The Pleaſures at God's right Hand, and of his Countenance, of the River of Life, the Pleaſure of ſeeing the God-Head looking out of the Eyes and Ears, and in the ſweet Countenance of the Man Chriſt Jeſus. And then for *Honour*, they have the Crown, they have the Scepter,

Scepter, they have the Robe-Royal, they have
 the Throne; yea, they have all Things a-
 mass'd together: There, the Powers of the
 Soul are enlarg'd and fill'd; there, the Man
 sees the Wisdom of God, and beholds the
 Mysteries of that Wisdom which formerly he
 saw little of: When he swims on the Surface
 of the Earth by some Hints of Revelation, he
 is made to cry out, *O the Depths of the Riches
 of the Wisdom of God!* But when he comes to
 swim, as it were, in the Ocean of that Wis-
 dom, O what Mysteries cast up there! O
 what Displays of infinite Love, when the Re-
 cords and Archives of Heaven are opened to
 him! Then the Decree fills him with Extasie
 of Wonder. When he beholds the Love of
 God, the Fountain of all Bless, that Love
 which is not checquer'd and interwoven with
 Frowns, by an eternal Emanation filling him!
 When he beholds the Power of God that ran-
 som'd him from the Power of a Grave, deli-
 ver'd him from the Slavery of Sin, conquer'd
 the Devil, asserted his Liberty, and broke his
 Bonds, O how will he wonder! So that we see
 it is a compleat Happiness, both as to the
 Negative and Positive Part of it.

7. And *Lastly*, It is a *dependent Happiness*.
 Whatever they have, yet the Fountain of it
 all is in Christ. It is by Union with him, and
 constant Communications from him that they
 stand, and that their eternal Life is preserved.
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There is no independent Being but God; there is no State we can be in that can cut off our Moral or Physical Dependance on him. Our Life, even in Heaven, is hid with Christ in God.

We come in the next Place, to propose and answer some Questions concerning this *Happiness*. Divines ask many Questions about it, and some of them, perhaps, are more curious than edifying: But I shall not trouble you with these, enclining rather to rest in what is more sure, and may be helpful to keep you from having wrong Apprehensions of that *Happiness*. And *First*, The *Papish* School-men, they tell us, we are happy in *Heaven* by a *Beatifick Vision*, and that this Vision or Sight of God is not the Act of the *Soul* or *glorified Spirit*; but the *Vision* is by the *Divine Essence* united to the *glorified Soul*, and, by this Union, they come to be happy. But the Truth is, they speak Jargon upon the Head, or else, they must make every glorified Soul to be Godded: For, for a Man to be happy without his own Acts, and without an actual Seeing, without a Vital Act of his own Soul seeing, and without real Joy arising from that Sight, is to speak pure Nonsense. I own indeed, they have an immediate View, that is, the Vail of Mortality is remov'd, the Vail of Ordinances, the Vail of Unbelief, the Vail of Faith, all these

these are removed; there is an immediate intuitive View, and perhaps of the *Divine Essence*, in some Sense, but not in the Sense of the Popish School-men: For there are real Acts of the Soul in Heaven; It is said, *We shall see him*, 1 *John* iii, 2. And, *Blessed are the pure in Heart*, Why are they blessed? for they shall see God, *Matth.* v. 8.

A second Question, *Are there bodily Pleasures in Heaven?* We must guard against that, and therefore, must answer in the Negative: Indeed, the *Jews* have very gross Notions of Heaven, they say, There are Three Things in Heaven that God furnishes Men with, whereby to make them happy: There's a great Ox, upon which they feed; and there's a great Fowl, and a great Fish, and that is the Food of Paradise. These are gross and carnal Notions of Heaven, and of the same Kidney with *Mahomet's* Paradise, where he promises his Votaries shall have *Wine and Women*. But we Answer, The Pleasures above are Pure, Spiritual, and Intellectual, fit for a God to give, and for a rational Being to receive. We own indeed, that glorified Souls, after they are out of the Body, will see the God-Head shining in Christ Jesus, and their Hearing-Sense, tho' without Bodily Organs, will be entertain'd with the Excellent Melody of Heaven; but there is no Carnal Pleasure there.

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The third Question is, *Do we see God with our bodily Eyes in Heaven?* This is the damnable Heresy of *Vorstius* and *Socinus*; they say, *That Christ, when he was in the Wilderness, tempted of the Devil, he was taken up into Heaven a great Part of these forty Days, and with his bodily Eyes he saw God; and that, after his Resurrection, he is stript of all that is earthly: So that there is no more Flesh and Blood in his Body, but he has a spiritual, aerinl Body, and, in that Body, he sees God himself, and that all Believers at the Resurrection, shall have no Bodies of Flesh, Blood and Bones, but an aerial Body, in which they shall see God.* Now, This makes God corporeal; that is, it makes him to have a Body, and leads in to the Heresy of the *Anthropomorphites*; and it is against the Scripture: For, when the Scripture speaks of the Believer's seeing God, it never means of the bodily Eye, but of a spiritual View, and of an intellectual beholding of him.

Another Question is, *Are there Degrees of Happiness in Heaven?* That is, *Do all share alike? Or, Are there some that have more of Heaven, and of this eternal Life than others?* We answer, The most probable Opinion, and which comes nearest to Truth, and we think it true, that there are Degrees of Glory in Heaven, and the Bible seems to be very clear for it, *He will reward every Man according to his Work.* They that have wrought much, he will give them

them the more Reward: *Thou hast gained ten Talents, have thou Authority over ten Cities*, says the Parable, *Luke xix. 17.* And the Prophet *Daniel* tells us, *Chap. xii. 3.* *They that be wise, shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever.* The Stars have much more Brightness than the Firmament it self. And the Apostle says, *2 Cor. ix. 6.* *He who soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly, and he which soweth abundantly, shall reap abundantly.* It carries a great Congruity in it to the Wisdom and Goodness of God, to crown his own Works of Grace; and according to the Measure of Grace he bestows here below, to reward the same above, by a proportionable Reward. But in this, we are far from maintaining the Doctrine of the Popish *Aureolas*, which they plead for to their Virgins, Doctors, and Martyrs, for their Works of Supererogation, and their meriting not only for themselves, but for others. Whence *Thomas Aquinas*, and the School-men plead for little Crowns, as Rewards given to them, above others in Heaven: But we call this devilish Arrogance, and maintain, That all the Degrees of Happiness in Heaven, they are all owing to free Grace. And we say, That they who have least Happiness in Heaven, have a full and compleat Satisfaction, and envy none: They are there like Vessels

Vessels of different Sizes cast into the Sea;
small and great are all fill'd.

The next Question is a little more curious, and we will be somewhat modest in answering it, viz. *Does the Happiness of those in Heaven receive an additional Increase?* That is, *may they become more happy?* We answer, According to our best Divines, additional Happiness has been given to Angels and Saints: The great Doctor Owen says, Upon Christ's Incarnation, and his fulfilling the Work of Redemption, and his going Home to Heaven, there was an additional Happiness given both to Angels and Saints: And indeed, if there be such Revelations made unto them, I do not see any Absurdity in saying, There may be some Addition made to their Happiness: And tho' their Happiness before was perfect, because the Faculties and Capacities were full; yet now, they get a new Enlargement of Faculty, and a new Fill of it.

We shall now give you some Reasons in a few Words, why the Lord prepares a Heaven and eternal Life for his People.

1. Because he has a Mind to demonstrate his Goodness and Love, and his free Grace to the outmost: And, (to speak with Reverence) he cannot demonstrate them more, than in giving us a Christ to buy a Heaven, and Christ in giving himself for our Heaven, to convey all into a Believer's Possession. The Riches

Riches of Grace, and the Riches of Glory, are manifested in Vessels prepared to Glory. What is the making of a World? what is the continuing of Mankind? What are Ordinances and establish'd Forms, but for this great Work, even to discover the exuberant Largeness of Divine Bounty, in giving eternal Life unto his Elect; and glorifying them with himself to the uttermost?

2. Another Reason is, for the Honour of Christ; he is to be the First-born among many Brethren, he is to have more Honour and Happiness than all the World beside: He is the Father's Son, and our Brother, he is God's equal, sits upon the Throne, and has an Honour peculiarly due unto him as Redeemer and Mediator: And as many glorified Saints, so many pendant Pearls in the Crown of our Lord Jesus Christ; and therefore he must make up these his Jewels.

3. And, *lastly*, He gives a Heaven, that he may encourage Obedience; no Man shall serve God for nought: They were but a Set of cursed Liars, of whom we read, *Mal. iii. 14. Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: And, what Profit is it that we have kept his Ordinances?* Indeed, it is very likely they had little Good, or Profit, and as little Reward, by over-rating their formal Service and Obedience; but sure I am, there is Profit every Way in serving God, he will not let any shut the Doors of the Temple

Temple for nought, he will not let any of you open your Bibles for nought: He will not let you give a Sigh, or drop a Tear in your sincere serving him, without rewarding it with Heaven and eternal Life. Yea, I say, It is not Labour in vain, nor like the washing of the *Ethiopian*, Cardinals, and other great Ministers of State, who have been rejected, and cast off by their Masters, have had Reason to complain, and say, Had they served God as faithfully, as they did their King, he would not have cast them off at last. O! he is a blessed and bountiful Master. When *Polycarp*, one of the primitive Martyrs, was going to the Lions, to be devoured, his Persecutors bid him renounce Christ: *Oh! no*, says he, *I have been his Servant these Fourscore Years, and he never did me Harm: And therefore I will not cast off my Master now.* O! the Reward is great! *Verily there is a Reward for the Righteous; verily there is a God that judgeth in the Earth.*

I shall only improve what has been said at the Time, in a few Words of Consolation, and shall reserve the other Uses to another Occasion. Is it so then, that there is a future Happiness, eternal Life and Bless, in Reserve for the Lord's People; O! this is Matter of Comfort to all them that lay hold on eternal Life. O! say ye, who can do that? Eternal Life is far from us, and we have but short Arms: But, I say, Eternal Life is just brought to your
H Doors;

Doors; it is a wonderful Word, *Isai. lvi. 1.*
My Salvation is near, and my Righteousness to be
revealed. Only open the Door, and put out
 your Hands, and take it: Lay hold upon
 eternal Life, and it is yours, lay hold upon
 Christ, and he is yours: He is this eternal
 Life, he is the Fountain of Life, he is the
 Tree of Life, he is the Bread of Life, he is
 the Water of Life: This is the true God, and
 Life eternal, O! lay hold upon him. O!
 Sirs, Folk have no *Insurance Office* for their
 Lives; Men may insure other Things to you,
 but they cannot insure your Lives. Persons
 that were in perfect Health last Sabbath, are
 now stepping into Eternity. And therefore,
 O! Sirs, do not neglect the Opportunity, but
 lay hold on eternal Life; the Crown of Life
 is laid to your Doors; open the Door in God's
 Name, and receive it, and clasp now about
 the Mercy Seat. Unbelief hews, as it were,
 the Throne of Grace into Pieces, it spits in
 the very Face of God, and stabs him at the
 very Heart, while his Heart is gushing out
 Kindness and Love to poor Sinners. O! ye
 that are young Folk, lay hold on him. O
 ye old Sinners, turn ye from your former evil
 Ways, and lay hold upon Christ, for in and
 through him is this eternal Life.

The Doctrine speaks Comfort to you that
 have believed: Ye who can say, he has open-
 ed my Heart, and made Entrance for himself,
 Well,

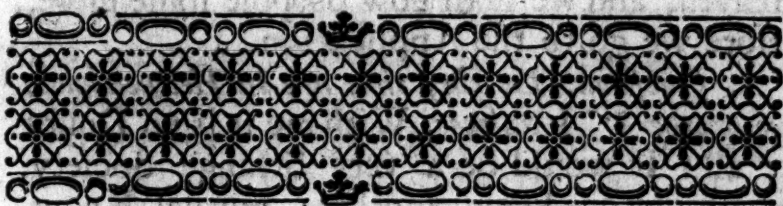
Well, I shall tell you for your Comfort, he will open the Door of *Paradise* to you, he will give Commission to the Porters to open to you; for you know, the City has twelve Gates, and they have twelve Angels keeping them, as it were: Now, he will give them Orders to let in such a Man, let in such a Woman, give them a triumphant Entrance, and an abundant Entrance into my heavenly Kingdom: They opened their Hearts to me, when I offered my self to them in the Gospel. This is Comfort to you, Sirs; an Act of Faith is better than a written Covenant without Faith. Believe this, and take Comfort from it.

Again, it is Matter of Consolation to them that are diligent in the Way and Use of Means, and to them that have got a sweet Hope of Heaven. The Apostle speaking before *Agrippa* of the Resurrection, says, *Acts xxvi. 7. Unto which Promise, our twelve Tribes, instantly serving God Day and Night, hope to come.* That's a sure Hope; whereas, the Hope of the Hypocrite is like the Spider's Web, and like the giving up of the Ghost. The Hope of a Believer, is a Hope that purifieth the Heart, and makes a Man or Woman study Holiness: and that Hope will never disappoint them, it will never frustrate, or bring them to Shame. O! hope continually, and never part with thy Hope, poor Believer.

It is Comfort to you also that love Christ's Appearance: I am sure, some of you dare not for your Souls deny, but ye have loved him, yea, loved him with a most fervent and superlative Love. Well, the Promise is, *Psal. xci, 14. Because he hath set his Love on me, therefore I will deliver him, I will set him on high.* That is, I will make you Kings and Queens.

Lastly, It is Comfort to all you that are praying folk, and that are seeking Communion with him, they that call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved, saved from temporal Trouble, from spiritual Trouble, from eternal Trouble. And to conclude, It is Comfort to you, that will not, that cannot let indwelling Sin live peaceably within you. Ye that are mortifying the Deeds of the Body, ye shall live. And now, what are ye doing? Are ye repenting of Sin, and is there nothing so bitter to you? Well, that is Repentance unto Life. Sinning is a turning away from God and Life, and Repentance is a turning again to God in Christ to get Life.

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S E R M O N VII.

R O M. vi. 23.

But the Gift of God is Eternal Life, &c.

ALL the Children of *Adam* are destinate to an eternal State, and they are never put into that State, till they be meet for it: The Vessels of Mercy are prepared by him unto Glory, the Vessels of Wrath are fitted for Destruction: Never a Man goes to Hell till he be ripe for it, never any Fewel burns there till it be dry and Barren, and prepar'd for the Flames. Death is the native Fruit, and Product of our Works, *The Wages of Sin is Death*: Heaven is the Fruit of a Gracious Donation, a free Gift, *The Gift of God is eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

We have spoken at some Length upon this sweet Subject; and, indeed it is a pleasant Subject to the Lord's People; and last Occa-

sion, we proposed several Questions concerning Heaven, and we shall now propose some more, before we go to the Application.

1. *Question, Do they that are in Heaven know one another?* I answer, With me it is no Doubt at all: It would be a very Strange Society, where not one knew another; mutual Knowledge of one another, adds very much to the Comfort of a Society. Sure they cannot but know one another, when they sit at the same Table together, they sit down with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, and shall know these Patriarchs, and many others, whom they never saw; and the Patriarchs, Prophets and Apostles will know not only these eminent Saints recorded in Scripture, or such as they have been acquainted with while on Earth, but the vast multitude of Martyrs, Confessors, and others, whom they never heard of: *Adam* was asleep, when God took a Rib out of his Side; and yet, when he awoke, he knew that it was a Part of his own Body. The three Disciples had never seen *Moses* and *Elias*; and yet, upon the Mount of Transfiguration, they knew them whenever they look'd upon them. It is beyond all peradventure, that we will know our Relations; the Husband will know the glorified Wife; the Wife her glorified Husband, the Father the Child, and the Child the Father, tho' there be no carnal Relation there, nor any carnal Views on Account of that Relation,

lation, I mean, that conjugal Love they formerly had; yet there will be a Love of Relation, unspeakably sweeter than what was ever on Earth.

2. Another Question is, *Whether do they that go to Heaven remember what they had done, or were doing on the Earth?* I answer, There are many Things they have done on Earth, that are not worth noticing or remembring; Baubles and Trifles are not worth the Notice of an exalted and glorified Spirit; yet we may say, there are several Things they may remember, even in Heaven; they will remember the Lord's Way with them; they will remember their own Way: They will remember how they left their Relations, and what the Church of God was doing, when they left the other World; They will have the Remembrance of all spiritual Things which are proper for the higher House, and the saving Knowledge of God in Christ, which they had here; they will, no doubt, have it all above.

3. A third Question, *Is there a material and fixed Throne in Heaven, about which the Glorified are encircled, and stay for ever?* Answer, I do not think it: I think indeed, that all Heaven is God's Throne; and that tho' there may be some Places, where there is a greater Manifestation of him, than in other Places in Heaven, and to that Place all the Glorified go, and there they admire and adore him; yet,

for any *Schetchinah* that goes hither and thither, where God will, as it was in the Wilderness, I will not meddle with that; we may warrantably say in general, *They follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes; and where he is, there will his Servants be.*

4. *Seeing there are none in Heaven that have Bodies but three, viz. Jesus Christ, Enoch and Elijah; is there nothing but Silence there?* I Answer with the great Doctor Owen, There is a Voice, and a Melody in Heaven among the Glorified, tho' they have not bodily Organs, they have the Understanding of what one another is doing; and they have their accented Praises; and tho they want bodily Ears, yet they hear and understand them better, than when we hear one another sing. It would be an odd Thing, to see all the Glorified just quiet, and doing nothing in Heaven, or, none knowing what another is doing there. There are certainly *Hallelujahs* there; but we meddle not with the Manner how they communicate their Thoughts to one another.

5. Another Question is, *Will there be an Increase of the Saints Happiness after the last Day?* I answer plainly, There was an Increase when Christ ascended into Heaven, and there will be an Increase of their Happiness at the Resurrection, when Soul and Body are again united together; and if there be any more, we cannot tell. It may be, that the lowest Saint
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in Heaven may acquire as much Happiness, as the most Eminent hath now: But how far the Measure of the Soul's Knowledge and Joy may go, we cannot determine, nor will we meddle with it.

6. The last Question shall be this, *What is the Nature of that Society above?* We Answer, They are a Church, and they have their Worship, even an instituted and solemn Worship, which will continue till the last Day; and even Believers on Earth enter into communion with them in some Things. *Ye are come to the General Assembly and Church of the first born, to the Spirits of just Men made perfect.* Heb. xii. 23. It is a most glorious and august Worship, which they have above in the higher House: They have their solemn Acknowledgements of that Grace and Love of God in the Sanctification and Salvation of all the Elect, and they are ascribing the Glory of all to the Mediator: And it cannot but be a most decent and comely Worship, which Christ has the immediate ordering of, and where all the Company is sinless, and have not the least Inclination to Confusion or Disorder. The Apostle Paul says, 1 Cor. xiv. 40. *Let all Things be done decently, and in Order.* And indeed, the Triumphant Church is a most noble and excellent Pattern, if we could conceive aright of that Order: Observe then the wonderful Order; for, *First*, There is a Temple; and tho' there
be

be no material Temple in Heaven, yet the whole higher House is his Temple, and the Lord God is in this his Temple. (2.) There is a Throne of Grace in Heaven, and the great and glorious God is now upon that Throne. (3.) The exalted High-priest is officiating before the Throne, in the Room of all his People. (4.) Next unto him are the Angels, and such of them as excell in Strength, in Knowledge, in Holiness; and in every Perfection are nearest unto the great High-priest, waiting for Orders, that they may run his Errands, and do his Commandments; and then all the Saints in their due Order. All this was eminently represented by the first Erection of a national Church among the *Jews* in the Wilderness: There was the Tabernacle; that was a Type of the Temple above: There was the Holy of Holies, where the Mercy Seat was; that was a Type of the Throne of Grace above: There was the High-priest that entered into the Holy of Holies; he represented our Lord Jesus Christ, who appears, and stands before the Throne, making Intercession for his People: There were the inferior Priests waiting upon the High-priest; these represented the Angels that wait as Servants and Attendants on our Lord Jesus Christ: And then, there were the Tents of all the twelve Tribes, the Tabernacle was in the Midst, and all the Tribes and their Tents orderly plac'd about it.

it. *Moses* made and set all, according to the Pattern shewed to him, when he was in the Mount with God, and may teach us, that every Thing above is in its due Order.

We come now to make some Use and Improvement of this. And what we have said of this future State, and of this eternal Life, may inform us of many Things. As,

1. It lets us see how much we are indebted to Revelation, for the Knowledge of a future State; the Light and Glory of the higher House would be cover'd with Darkness, as to us, without the Light of Revelation: Life and Immortality are brought to light by the Gospel. O! what confus'd Notions have the Heathens of a future State! what dark Ideas of Happiness! the most refin'd of their Philosophers had gross Conceptions of the Happiness above; they scarce believ'd there was a future Happiness, they did not know the Nature of it, neither *that* it was, nor *what* it was; the Gospel is the Word of eternal Life; we cannot get it in the Writings of Philosophers; but we will get it here, in the Words of the Truth of the Gospel; and we are under great and many Obligations to God for such a clear Discovery of Heaven.

2. It lets us see our great Debt to Christ. This Heaven, as great as it is, is all owing to him, *The Gift of God is eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* All his three mediatory

Offi-

Offices, are imploy'd, and execute, with Respect to our Heaven: As a *Prophet*, he draws aside the Vail, and lets us see the higher House: As a *Priest*, he takes away all Mountains that stand in our Way to Happiness, he rends the Vail by his own Flesh, he buys a Heaven, and opens the Doors of *Paradise* again: And as a *King*, he confers Heaven, *Then shall the King say to them on his right Hand, Come ye, inherit the Kingdom,* Mat. xxv. All his Offices share in the Work of bringing every Son to Glory.

3. It lets us see, why Believers look on Death with so friendly an Aspect. Why, it is appointed for all Men once to die; but only the Reprobates are condemned to die, the Elect are appointed, but not condemned: The Wicked Person says to Death, *Hast thou found me, O mine Enemy*; but a Believer reckons Death his Friend. Why? It lands him in eternal Life. It is like a hard trotting Horse, but brings him Home to his Father's House; it is a dark Avenue; but at the End of the Avenue, there is Light and Life for evermore. Death was a formidable Enemy; but is now turn'd to be of a Party with us. Believers may look upon Death without Terrour. Why? Christ has unstunged Death; it has now no Sting; yea, and many Times it has no Terrour: And I have seen young Folk, who had got Mercy and Grace, die in Triumph, beyond

yond many old Professors and Christians; and not only may the Godly look on Death without Horrour, but they can say to it, O Death, thou art welcome, thou art doing us a good Turn, and much better Service, than any other Thing could do: All the Communion ever we were at, all the Sermons that ever we heard, could not do to us what thou art doing; for thou art delivering us from all Sin, and bringing us Home to our Father's House; the Reason is, the Believers see eternal Life at the Back of Death; whereas, the Wicked may see a Hell following upon the Back of their Death.

4. It may inform us of the Reason of the great Diligence some are at in the Way of Duty, and Use of Means; they have the Crown in View, they have Heaven in their Eye: and therefore they labour, they are steadfast, they are unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord. Why is all this? and, what is the Spur to all this Diligence? They know their Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord, they are not washing the *Ethiopian*, it is not a Labouring in the Fire; the free Grace of God will reward the most minute Service: And therefore they want not Encouragement, and good Reason why they work: They fight, they run the Race with Patience, because they are commanded, and they

they know there is a Prize, a Lawrel at the End of it.

5. Again, is there a Heaven, and a future Happiness reserved for the Lord's People? It lets us see what supports them under the greatest of Sufferings, why they will suffer any Thing, even the worst Thing, rather than commit the least Sin: Other Folk, they will commit the greatest Sin, ere they suffer the least Punishment: But the People of God, when their Graces are in Exercise, they know of a better Estate, and a better Portion than they are forfeiting, or can lose here: They cannot lose so much as they will gain; when they are once fairly posselt of Heaven, and they have this Heaven to look to, for making up all their Losses. It is said, *Heb. x. 34. They took joyfully the spoiling of their Goods.* Was it not enough for them, that they lost their Goods, though they did it not joyfully; the Reason follows, *Knowing in your selves, that ye have in Heaven a better, and an enduring Substance.* There was the Prop, and there was their Support. So *Moses*, he would not be reckoned the Son of *Pharaoh's* Daughter, he would not prefer the Pleasures of Sin for a Season, unto the believing Prospect he had of a better Life. And therefore endured, as seeing him who is invisible, and had an Eye to the Recompence of Reward; he knew of a better Crown above, than what he was forfeiting here; yea, and

and not only so, but the greatest Extremity of Torment that the Devil racks his Wit to contrive, cannot, will not prevail against the Grace of God, to turn his People out of the Way of their Duty: They can, through Christ strengthening them, suffer Torment in all its possible Forms and Shapes. See that Scripture, *Heb. xi. 35. Women received their Dead raised to Life again: And others were tortured, not accepting Deliverance, that they might obtain a better Resurrection.* It is said, *Others were tortured*; the Greek Word is very emphatick, it signifies, they were made like a Drum, that is, either they flayed the Skins off them, and made Drums of their Skins, or, they stretched and distended their Bodies upon Racks like a Drum; but for all that they would not turn aside, they would not accept of Deliverance. Why? they had *the Hope of a better Resurrection.* The Sufferers, when they were condemn'd to be Tympaniz'd, and then were delivered by their Conforming, that Deliverance was like a Resurrection, for they were just going to die, and they got a Remission because of their Conforming. But here is a better Resurrection, even the Resurrection at the Great Day: They were Tortur'd, Tympaniz'd, and would not accept of Deliverance, for they expected a better Resurrection, and that was their great Support; there is a Life, an eternal Life in View, and therefore

fore they cannot accept of Deliverance on
sinful Terms, &c.



S E R M O N VIII.

ROMANS VI. 23.

But the Gift of God is Eternal Life, &c.

WE come now to an Use of *Trial*, to know whether eternal Life be ours. Are we Candidates for it? Are we going to *Zion* with our Faces thitherward? Are we Heirs of Glory, and is Heaven reserved for us, and are we reserved for it? Whether is Heaven or Hell to be our final State? That we may be clear and distinct as to that Soul-concerning Question, I shall give you a few very plain and popular Remarks.

I. All they that have opened their Hearts to Christ shall have Heaven opened to them; *He that believeth on me hath everlasting Life; he that hath laid Hold upon the Refuge, and*
upon

upon the Hope set before him. Has he opened thy Mind to see the Glory of Christ? Hath he opened thy Heart to embrace the Excellencies of Christ? Hath he opened thy Will to consent unto the Contrivance by Christ? And, hast thou given Christ a Triumphant Entrance by Faith into thy Soul? Well: Thou art to have an Entrance into Heaven; for he opens the Doors of Paradise to them, who open the Doors of their Hearts to him. *He, that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life. John iii. 36.*

2. Have ye found your Souls full of *Love* to him? Can ye say, ye love him better than all Things? That ye love nothing better, yea nothing so well as ye love him? Can ye say, ye have given him the Love of Benevolence, so as ye wish well to his Interests, his Work and People; and also the Love of Beneficence, so as ye do all the Good ye can to his Glory, and to his Image where ye see it? Have ye a Love of Complacency to him, so as ye can delight in your Lord Jesus? Is he the Center of your Wishes, and your exceeding Joy? And can ye say, ye have found more *Love* in your Hearts to him, than to Wife or Child? Can ye say so? Well, then I can say to you, Ye shall have Eternal Life: For so runs the Promise, *Psal. xci. 14. Because he hath set his Love on me, therefore will I deliver him, I will set him on high, &c.* If a Spark of Seraphick Love is
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come

come out of Heaven, and wrapt about your Hearts, and gone back to its own Centre again, and carried your Souls along with it, and made your Hearts like the Angel that appear'd to *Manoah*, and went up in the Flame. If ye can say, *Lord thou knowest all Things, thou knowest that I love thee*; well, he loves you, and will manifest himself to you, and will give unto you eternal Life; and what that Life is no Man can fully tell. *For Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man, the Things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* 1 Cor. ii. 9.

3. Stand ye Candidates for Heaven and Eternal Life? Then ye have a Heart-purifying Hope: *Whosoever hath this Hope, purifieth himself, as God is pure,* 1 John iii. 3. Every Body expects Heaven, few despair of coming there; we are all going to Heaven, in our own Conceit, tho' we be but very indifferent Sort of Folk: But this Hope is a holy Expectation, and a certain Looking for the determin'd Reward; and there is a winding up of the Cable till they come to the Anchor: For, whenever a Man closes with Christ in the Day of Divine Power, he casts and fixes his Anchor, not downward but upward; for there is no solid Ground here on this Earth to fix it on: And all the Believers After-walk should be a Winding up of the Cable, till he come to where his Anchor is, *perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God*;

God : every Man that hath this Hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure : He studies to be like God, and the Language of his Practice and Conversation is, ' I am serving a holy God, I expect a holy Place above, and holy Work, and holy Company in Heaven, and must not I be holy ? Is it not most agreeable, is it not all the Reason in the World that I should be like them ? That I should study a Conformity to a holy God, and to the Inhabitants of Heaven, who are *made perfect in Holiness* ? Ye that say, Ye have the Hope of Heaven, and yet can Lie, and Swear, and Cheat, and profane the Sabbath, and neglect the Worship of God in your Families and Closets ; truly, your Hope will prove like the Spider's Web, or like the giving up of the Ghost ; ye will lose all in the End : For the Heirs of Heaven have a Heart-purifying Hope, they study to purify themselves, even as God is pure.

4. Are ye Heirs of Heaven, Candidates of Glory, and Expectants of Eternal Life ? O then Mortification of Sin will be your great Work and Study. Never a Man shall go to Heaven that lets Sin dwell peaceably in him : A Man that gives his Heart to Corruption, as a peaceable Habitation to that *accursed Thing*, he shall never have a Place above, *Rom. viii. 13. If ye live after the Flesh ye shall die, that is to say, ye shall go to Hell ; but if ye, through*

the Spirit, do mortify the Deeds of the Body, ye shall live, that is, ye shall get Heaven. O! says a true Believer, If I were to die this Day, I think I can say it in his Sight, my greatest and highest Wish and Desire in the World is, to be delivered from Sin; Corruption is in every Room, and Christ is in every Room; and it is a Wonder, a Miracle of Mercy, that Christ goes not away, and refuses to live in the same Room with his Enemy, yea, and with his greatest Enemy; for Sin is a greater Enemy to God than the Devil is. Now, Sin is in every Faculty, and has set up its Trophies of Victory in every Faculty of the Soul, and after Regeneration there are the Remainers of Corruption in every Faculty: And, says the Believer, I cannot think that Christ and Sin should dwell together: O! when will this Enemy be taken away? O the Motions of Sin! O the Enmity of my Heart against God! O the Carnality and Self-seeking! O! when shall I be intirely delivered from all these? Art thou thus employ'd? It is an Indication of thy Interest in Heaven, and that thou art an Heir of Glory.

5. And, which is much the same Thing with the former, thou wilt study Sanctification, *He hath chosen us to Salvation through Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth, 2 Thess. ii. 13.* Whosoever expect Heaven they are holy, they are studying Holiness; there is a Connection

Connection between Holiness and Heaven; Holiness makes Folk meet for Heaven, Col. i. 12, *Giving Thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.* Holiness is Heaven begun, it is the Kingdom of Heaven entering into us before we enter into it; it is a Part of Heaven, Holiness is initial Heaven, and Heaven is consummate Holiness, and *without Holiness no Man shall see God.* Do ye study to be holy in your Principles? in your Motives, in your Manner of serving him, and in your Ends? Have ye progressive Holiness, striving to add a Cubit to the Stature of the *New Man*, to be more and more holy? Can ye say it in his Sight, It is your great Desire, that let him do with you what he will, let you suffer what he will, yet if he keep you holy ye desire or seek no more. Well, you are a Candidate of Heaven, and an Heir of eternal Life.

6. And *Lastly*, The Man that is an Heir of Heaven, he is spiritual and heavenly Mind-ed; *Our Conversation is in Heaven*, says the Apostle, *Phil. iii. 20.* The World will be ready to say, Your Conversation in Heaven! We think ye even act like other Folk, and weakly enough. Well, we have another kind of Conversation than the World has, for all that. The Greek Word Πολιτεύμα, signifies to act like a Burghers, to Trade like a Burghers.

We do not Trade, indeed, to the *East-Indies*, nor are we taken up with your new Erections, tho' they be Things we will not condemn; but our Trade is in Heaven, our Converse and Conversation is there. The Man that is going to Heaven, he sends his Plenishing away before-hand: As ye know, when a Man designs to flit, before he go to the House, or ly a Night in it, he sends his Furniture away; so an Heir of Glory, he sends his Plenishing to Heaven before-hand, he sends the Topswarm of his most enlarged and vigorous Affections to Heaven, and says, I will quickly follow, I would fain be with you.

We come now to an Use of Consolation. This Doctrine of Future Happiness, that is reserved for Believers, serves for Comfort against a great many Evils. Such as,

1. It gives Comfort against Persecution. The Apostle says, *2 Thess. i. 6. Seeing it is a righteous Thing with God to render Tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled rest with us. Rest with you, Paul, are you mocking us? There is not a Man under Heaven has less Rest than you have, you are toss'd Night and Day. Yea, but Paul might Answer, We have a Rest in our Bosoms, a Peace and Rest with God, and we will quickly have an everlasting Rest: And therefore we know what we are saying, when we say, And to you who are troubled rest with us, when*
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' Angel, thou knowest, therefore tell me, who
 ' are these that are cloathed in white Gar-
 ' ments, and Crowns on their Heads? O they
 ' look well! Then I'll tell you, *John*, what
 they are; *These are they which came out of great*
Tribulation, and have washed their Robes in the
Blood of the Lamb. The Church of Rome talks
 of little Bits of Thrones, set next to the great
 Throne, where the rich Men who had Works
 of Supererogation, and had merited more than
 they needed to themselves, and therefore help-
 ed other Folks with some of their good Works;
 they say, these shall have little Bits of Thrones
 next to Christ: And this is all to exalt the
 proud Doctrine of Merit. But I am sure, if
 we speak in the way of Free Grace, the more
 that Folk suffer, the more Reward: And, if
 we may speak so, there are some Saints obli-
 ged unto the Wicked for their Degrees of Glo-
 ry in Heaven. ' O! may many a Saint say,
 ' I have little Holiness, yea but the Wicked
 ' persecute me, and I suffer at their Hands
 ' for Christ's Sake; the Lord helps me to suf-
 ' fer, and tho' I have little Holiness, yet my
 ' Sufferings honour me, and the Wicked give
 ' me Occasion to get a bright Crown. I
 have frequently told you, That Persecution
 is one of the grossest Sins in the World: It is
 worse than Atheism. Persecution is the Mark
 of the Beast, for it is said, *Daniel vii. 5. The*
Beast had three Ribs in the Mouth of it between
 the

the Teeth of it ; shewing, that he would devour much Flesh : And it is the best of Flesh, it is the Flesh of Saints that he eats ; he is a Lion, and nothing but the Flesh and Blood of the Saints will satisfy him.

2. This Doctrine of Eternal Life may give Comfort to deserted Souls, to them that are still complaining of the Hidings of his Face: From the Moment, say some, that I got a Sight of Christ and of the Crown, I have been walking in the Dark almost, and for any Thing I see, I will see no more of it, till I see it in Heaven. Well, what suppose ye should walk in Darkness all your Life, and be in Bondage through Fear of Death ; He will come, and surprize you with another Sight of the Crown when ye are dying, as ye got when ye first began to live in Conversion. The Jews had but two Seasons wherein they had goodly Showers, they had the former Rain at Seed-time, and they had the latter Rain, when the Corn was shooting and filling, and yet they expected a Harvest. What if ye get a Sight of the Crown, when ye first enter on the Way of Life and lay hold on Christ, and get no more Sight of it till ye come to die: Ye must hold on. Job complains, Chap. xxiii. 8, 9. Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him : On the left Hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him ; he hideth himself on the right Hand, that

that I cannot see him. In Allusion to that, many poor Soul is ready to complain, and say, I go to Preachings, to Communion, to private Fellowships, and cannot see him: Hold on, there is a Heaven above, that will recompence you, where his Servants that serve him see his Face. There is no Cloud there, no Complaint there, no how long wilt thou far get me there; no why standest thou afar off there; no lift up the Light of thy Countenance there: For they have got all. O! it is comforting, there is a Day coming, when there shall be an Eternal Light without Dark-ness.

3. It is Matter of Consolation to poor tempted Souls. Satan buffets you, tempts you to blaspheme, and ye are like to go on to Despair. Well, in Heaven there is no Tempter: He buffeted *Paul*, but he cannot buffet him any more; he tempted our Lord to three Pieces of the grossest Wickedness that ever the World heard of, but he can tempt no more, and shortly ye will be above his Reach: He will rage and follow after you with his Chariots, but he will not overtake you. There the *Wicked*, and the Devil, that wicked one, cease from troubling, and there the *Weary* be at rest; here is Comfort to thee when he is buffeting thee. Was he not an impudent Devil to go and buffet *Paul*, the greatest Favourite Christ had in the World, a Man that had
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been in Heaven? Yea, says the Devil, I was in Heaven as well as he, and I am equal to him there. And he might well assault and buffet *Paul*, who had the Impudence to assault our Lord himself. Well, the Comfort is coming, there is no Tempter there, nor a sinful Suggestion thorow all Eternity.

I come now to a Word of Exhortation. O Sirs, is there a Heaven, an eternal Life, a future Happiness in Reserve for his People? Q then, endeavour to be among them, by laying hold upon that eternal Life. It is a strange Expression, *to lay hold on eternal Life!* Eternal Life may be thought far off, and at a great Distance. No, the Lord says, *My Salvation is near, and my Righteousness to be revealed. Isa. lvi. 1.* It is within Sight of your Faith, ye may handle the Imperial Crown by Faith, it is laid just at your Door; open the Doors of your Hearts, and ye may see it glaring in your Eyes with a peculiar Lustre; take it up, lay hold upon eternal Life. For God's sake, Sirs, for the sake of Christ's Blood, will ye all lay hold upon this purchased Life. O! what do ye mean? Your Friends are dying, your Neighbours are dying round about you; and the next Day, some of you that are hearing will be in your cold Grave. O! *now is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation; now the Mercy Seat is open, now God is propitious*

propitious by the Blood of his Son; O! lay hold upon the Crown; let no Man, no Trouble, no Devil take your Crown. O! will ye believe, will ye look to him, will ye hear him, and lay hold upon him?

Again, Seek the full Assurance of your Title: The Title is only by Christ's most perfect Righteousness; seek the Assurance of your Title to that Heaven, to that Eternal Life. It must not only be yours by Election, and by Purchase, and by Covenant, but ye must know your Title, and therefore get Assurance. I think it one of the greatest Sins a Godly Man can be guilty of, to be indifferent, whether he be an Heir of Heaven or not; I think a Godly Man can hardly be guilty of that Sin. He would be an odd kind of Courtier, who, when asked if he were in Favour at Court? Are you in full Favour with the King? Should Answer, Truly I know not, and I care not, it is all one to me. That would be reckoned a great Contempt of the King. So here, Are you a Child of God? To answer, I know not, I care not; that is dreadful! What! To be indifferent whether you be an Heir of Wrath, or an Heir of eternal Life! What in all the World do ye mean? Had you but a very petty Inheritance, you would seek to have its Evidences good and sufficient. O Sirs, it is Atheism, Self-love, and Pride, that make Folk think they have Religion,

Religion, have an Interest in in Christ, and are going to Heaven, and yet never examine it; O! look to it, Assurance is necessary in such an evil Day as this; ye cannot bear Sufferings, without Assurance of Heaven; ye cannot get a kindly Submission to the Will of God in any Trouble, without Assurance; ye cannot serve God cheerfully, nor be willing to die, without Assurance; nor can ye say, *Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness*; eternal Life is laid up for me in Heaven, and I am kept for it. For the Lord's Sake, know where ye are, and how ye stand, whose ye are, whence ye are, and whither ye are going.

And then, to conclude, when ye have got Assurance, then take now and then a prophetic View of your Inheritance. It is a most unaccountable Thing, for Men to pretend they are going to Heaven, and yet will not think on Heaven once in a long Time. An apparent Heir to a Crown, or an Estate, will be now and then viewing it, and saying within himself, All this is to be mine; Christian, do thou the same. Go about *Zion*, the triumphant *Zion*, tell her Towers, but ye cannot number them. Look to her twelve Ports, every one of them is but one Pearl. What a City must that be? The New *Jerusalem* hath wide Ports, that will take in Thousands at once. Look to the Mansion, the Chamber that Christ is making

making ready for you: Peep in there by Faith, and see what is preparing for you. Hear the sweet Voice and Melody of the higher House, and see there a God in our Flesh and Nature upon the Throne, walk up and down there by Faith; it is worth your while to travel up and down the higher House, having that well grounded Hope, which can say, *All I see is mine.*



S E R M O N. IX.

ROMANS VI. 23.

But the Gift of God is Eternal Life, &c.

THE next Observation the Words offer unto us, is, *That Heaven, and eternal Life is the Gift of God*; it is a Deed of meer Grace, and undeserved Favour, the Text says, *The Gift of God is eternal Life.* The whole strain and Current of the Bible runs upon this: And it is the Characteristick of a true Scheme of Doctrine, or Religion, when

when the Tendency of all its Parts is, to exalt free Grace, to give all to God, and to take all Ground of glorying from the Creature. They of the Church of *Rome* are loth to own eternal Life to be the free Gift of God, tho' it be express Scripture; yea, sometimes they directly deny it, and shun to own it. We say, it is the Gift of God, and all of free Grace, and meer Favour.

In speaking to it, we will, 1. prove, That Heaven, and eternal Life, is the free Gift of God, and the Effect of free Grace. 2. Shew what kind of Gift this is. 3. Give you the Reasons why God will have eternal Life conveyed to his People by way of free Gift. And, *lastly*, improve it.

1. Consider, That all temporal Blessings, even the most minute Mercies, are all owing unto free Grace, much more a Heaven: And if we cannot deserve the least Thing, much less can we deserve the greatest: If we cannot deserve a Crumb of Bread, how can we deserve the Tree of Life, and the Bread of Life? *Jacob* says, *Gen. xxxii. 10. I am not worthy of the least of all the Mercies, and of all the Truth which thou hast shewed unto thy Servant.* Lay a Crumb in one Scale, and me in another, and I am outweighed; for Sin has made me lighter than Vanity. A Crumb is of more Value than we can deserve; common Preservation, and common Maintenance is all of meer Gift.

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If thou wilt give me Bread to eat, and Raiment to put on (says the same Jacob) then shall the Lord be my God. Gen. xxviii. 20, 21. As if he had said, I do not merit Bread, but thou may'st give it. So Agur cries for a competent Maintenance, neither Poverty nor Riches; but Food convenient for him, Prov. xxx. 8. Our Lord bids us seek this, Give us this Day our daily Bread. Preservation is a Deed of Grace: Lord, thou preservest Man and Beast, Psal. xxxvi. 6. It is an Act of precious Grace, that the Horse doth not stumble, and fall under you, and that you break not your Necks, much more your Preservation from Sin, Wrath, and from Hell, and that everlasting Death, which is the Wages of Sin. Esau asks Jacob? What mean these great Numbers of People that I have met? Jacob ascribes his numerous Family to the mere Grace and Gift of God; These, says he, are the Wives and Children which God hath graciously given thy Servant. Gen. xxxiii. 5. Some Men would have boasted, and said, We have purchas'd so many Wives, and begotten so many Children, and what not. No, says Jacob, all that I have is of meer Gift; from the Eldest to the Youngest, they are all the Gifts of God, These are the Children which God hath given me: We cannot deserve a Child; nay, not so much as a mis-shapen monstrous Child; far less can we deserve the eternal Son of God, who is eternal Life, and the Gift of God.

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2dly, Consider, and take a View of the whole OEconomy of Man's Redemption and Salvation, from first to last; all is owing to free Grace; and is mere Gift, even from Election; to eternal Life; free Grace runs through the Whole of it. Election is the first Link of that Golden Chain, and that is of Grace, as the Apostle says, *Rom. xi. 5. — There is a Remnant, according to the Election of Grace.* And the 9th Chap. is full of it, proving that the Lord loved *Jacob*, before he had done Good, or *Esau* any Evil. It was free Grace that put thy Name, O Believer, in the Book of Life; ye were lying in your Blood, when, with an everlasting Love, he loved you unto eternal Life. The Covenant of Redemption, that brings about this eternal Life, is an Act of Grace; the giving of Christ to the Elect, and the giving the Elect to Christ, it is all Gift, mere Gift and Grace; the Covenant of Grace is all Gift; being as a worthy, solid, Orthodox Divine calls it, *A Cluster of Promises*; All that God is to do for the Elect, is engag'd for; and all that the Elect must do in Point of Gratitude, is also engag'd for in the Promise. The Promises what God will do for his People, and the Promises to make them do; all are Grace! Can ye suppose that we deserved such a Favour, as to be taken into Covenant with God; or, that he should send his Son to purchase that eternal Life? No, it was mere Grace, *God so*
K *loved*

loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life. John iii. 16. We were not desiring a Son, we were not deserving one, we could not compel him to it, no natural Goodness could oblige him; it was all a mere Deed of Grace; for *God so loved the World, &c.* Christ dying to buy this Heaven to us, is a Deed of Grace; for while we were yet Enemies, Christ died for us. The Apostle has a notable *Climax* in that, *Rom: v. 7. For scarcely for a righteous Man will one die* (that is, for a Man, that tho' he wrongs no Body, yet is as little useful) *yet, peradventure, for a good Man, some would even dare to die.* They say, The Apostle speaks there in Allusion to the *Jews* their ranging up all Mankind into three Classes, *viz.* The wicked Man, that says, All that I can get is my own; the *just* Man, who says, What ye have is yours, and what I have is mine; and the *good* Man, that says, What is yours is your own, and what is mine, is part of it yours, and part of it mine; and I will imploy even my Riches for your Good. Now, for that Man, says the Apostle, for such a common Blessing to Mankind, a Man will even dare to die: But while we were Enemies, Christ died for us, we were neither just nor good, but Enemies. The whole of the Application is all of free Gift: All the Antecedents to eternal Life, they are all free Gift; such as
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Regeneration, that is a free Gift; for he calls with a holy Calling, *not according to the Works of Righteousness, which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the holy Ghost.* Tit. iii. 5. No Work must take Place here. Why are we called, and not others? not for Works that we have done, but of his own free Mercy he saved us. The Progress in the Way to eternal Life is all from him. Hence we are said to be created in Christ Jesus unto good Works: We have no Hand in our own new Creation, it is free Gift; for We are his Workmanship, he works all our Works in us, and for us: He gives the Principle, the Motion and the Faculty, and whole of the new Life; the preparing us for Heaven is a Deed of Grace, Col. i. 12. *Giving Thanks unto the Father, who has made us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.* Preparing us for Heaven, is as great a Gift, as preparing Heaven for us. And then the finishing Stroke of giving us Heaven, is a mere Gift; *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you.* And, Luke xii. 32. *Fear not, little Flock, for it is your Father's good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom.* The Righteousness of Jesus Christ, which gives Right and Title to eternal Life, is also a Gift, and therefore called *the Abundance of Grace, and the Gift of Righteousness,* Rom. v. 17. Ye had need to be well

fixed and established in this Truth; for, I assure you, the Church of *Rome* has damnably perverted this whole Doctrine; and if I had Time, I could give you a View of their Scheme, whereby ye would see, how the free Grace of God is treated by them; as also by *Arminians, Pelagians, and Quakers.* But,

3dly, If we would go to the Detail of the essential Properties and Ingredients of this eternal Life, of which we have spoke before, ye would see every one of them is owing to free Grace. The Sight of God, which is one of the chief Blessings of Heaven, and a Part of our formal Happiness, is owing to free Gift; the very Beginnings of the Sight, the half Looks of Faith, whereby we descry the pleasant Land, the View that the Lords People have even here, they are all owing to free Grace. We are blind; well, I will give you Eye-Salve; but alas, we have nothing wherewithal to buy it: True, then ye shall have it for nought; and blessed are your Eyes, for they see: It is a free Vouchsafement. The Knowledge of the Way to Heaven, and much more the Knowledge of Heaven it self, is so great a Mystery, that Christ with Joy and Exultation of Soul, thanks the Father for hiding these Things from the Wise and Prudent, and revealing them to Babes. We read of two joyful Days that Christ had on Earth, and that this was one of them, *Mat. xi. 25.* for reveal-

revealing the great Mysteries of the Gospel to Babes. Did the Babes deserve it? No: Even so, Father, because it seemed good in thy Sight. If the initial Views of these Things are owing to mere Grace and Sovereignty, how much more the consummating Sight and Enjoyment of God, and of the Glory that is above! It is all mere Gift. The Apostle says, 2 Cor. iv. 17. *For our light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.* There is Oratory and Rhetorick, that all the Heathen World, and all Men in it, not inspir'd, could never utter, *a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory!* exceeding all our Afflictions; there is no proportion between the one and the other. What! any Proportion betwixt your dropping a Tear, and getting an eternal Sight of God above, your Sorrow here, and the Fulness of Joy above, your losing any Thing for Christ on Earth, and your getting an hundred Fold even here, and in the World to come Life everlasting! There is no Proportion at all.

The *second* Thing propos'd in the Method, is, to shew what kind of Gift this is; and this I shall do, by giving you a few popular Properties of it, such as,

1. it is a *Royal* Gift: When crown'd Heads have a Mind to make known to their Courts, and to the World, their Magnificence, and

the Greatness of their Souls, they give great Gifts. *Alexander* the Great gave a vast Sum to *Aristotle*, and they tell us, that he gave a Kingdom to a Poor Man, that had formerly been a Gardner. God, when he gives, he gives like himself, a Royal Gift: He will not oblige you by giving you little Things: No, Believer, he will give you in Abundance, yea, and in Super-abundance.

2. Heaven is a *distinguishing* Gift: God gives many a Man natural Life, to whom he will never give eternal Life; he will give them Estates here, to whom he will never give a Share of the heavenly *Canaan* above: Many get full Coffers, who get none of the unsearchable Riches of Christ: He will give them Children, who shall never get an Interest in the holy Child Jesus: He will give them full Tables here, who shall feed upon fire and Brimstone in the other World: And therefore, eternal Life must be a Mark of particular Favour, and distinguishing Love.

3, It is an *unalterable* Gift; the Gifts and Callings of God are without Repentance; he is not a Man that he should Repent, or change his Mind. It is impossible for God to alter his Intention, or to be sorry for what he has done; and yet he is said to repent, when he changes his Dispensations, and takes another Way of working. When it is said, *It repented the Lord that he had made the World*, the
Mean-

Meaning is not, That God was ever sorry or grieved for making this goodly Fabrick; but the Meaning is, I will destroy the World: So, when he says, *It repenteth me that I have made Saul King*, 1 Sam. xv. 11. the Meaning is, I will cut him off, and will let none of his Seed succeed him in the Government. But the Lord's giving Heaven is without Repentance; he needs not repent: For, tho his People be Fools and Sinners, tho they many a Time turn aside, and grieve his Spirit: yet he foresaw all that, and he knew what they would be, and what they would do, when he choos'd them for Heaven; and he needs not have any new Reason or Grounds for changing his Purpose and Intention.

4. It is a *perfecting* Gift, it consummates the whole: All other Gifts are but the Means leading to this: All that the Lord gives in Time, and all that he does for his People, it is but as a Scaffold, to help up with this great Fabrick, and to build them up in Faith and Holiness unto eternal Life: When he gives you Grace, it is, that he may give you Glory: When he gives you Justification, it is, that he may give you Salvation: when he gives you his Word and Ordinances, it is, that ye, believing, may have eternal Life.

I come now to the *third* Thing proposed, viz. Why God has thought fit to bestow eter-

nal Life on his People by Way of Gift : And the Reasons may be these, and the like.

1. Because, if he do not bestow it this Way, he would not bestow it at all ; for Men could not expect it : If Heaven cannot be got by Way of Gift, it cannot be got at all. What can we give him for it ? We must buy our Wine and our Milk without Money, and without Price : For if it were but a Pepper Corn of true Religion, that God required of us, whereby to give us a Title to Heaven, we are not Masters of it ; and so we would lose Heaven : He must therefore either bestow Heaven and eternal Life upon us *gratis*, and by Way of Gift, or else we can never purchase it.

2. Our elder Brother has bought it, and he may very well, with Safety and Honour to all his Attributes, make a free Gift of it unto us. Ye will say, these are inconsistent, that Heaven should be bought, and yet be a free Gift. This is the Thing indeed that *Socinus* urges so much against Christ's Satisfaction, *viz.* Pardon of Sin is a free Act of Grace ; but if God hath got Payment, where is the Freedom of it ? We answer plainly, The Freedom of God's Grace held forth to us in the Bible never excludes Christ's Satisfaction, or Intercession ; it excludes every Thing of Merit on our Parts ; for the very Text tells us, it is the Gift of God ; but it excludes not an absolute Gift

Gift of absolute Mercy ; *It is through Jesus Christ our Lord, in whom we have Redemption through his Blood, even the Remission of Sins ;* but it is in him, the Gift and the Grace lies in him : And don't ye think, that Heaven is very free, when God provides one to purchase it for us, and when he accepts of a Surrogate ? He might have cast us all into Hell, and said, I will have personal Satisfaction, I will not admit of a Surety, or Cautioner, or a Days-man to do for you : He not only accepts of that which he was not obliged to, but he provides the very Man, the very Surety himself ; and to speak so, he gave him all that he gave for us, except the Sufferings of his humane Nature. If a Creditor shall provide a Cautioner for the Debitor, and give the Cautioner the Money to pay for the Debitor, it is even as free, as if he had frankly forgiven the Debt ; Christ buys it, but it is free as to us ; and it is so paid, that God must give it now as a Gift, and must require nothing for it. Why ? He has got full Payment for it already, and he must not take double Payment. Our elder Brother has Bought it to us ; and therefore we must have it freely.

3. The giving Heaven by Way of Gift, endears it very much to the Lord's People. I own indeed, that the Legalist thinks this to be odd Doctrine ; for a Man naturally loves rather to say, I have earned a Piece of Money,

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or a Piece of Bread with hard Labour, and with the Sweat of my Brows; than to say, Such a Man gifted me such a Thing: Yea, but a Man of an Evangelick Temper, likes Heaven the better that it comes by Way of Gift from the King of Heaven; he has the more Esteem for Heaven and eternal Life, that it is the Gift of God, the Gift of the King that has a Kindness for him, than if he had wrought it out by his own Works. It endears Heaven more to have it by Gift, than by Works.

4. And, *Lastly*, The Lord does this to overbid the Devil: The Devil says, I will give you Riches, I will give you Pleasures, I will give you Honours; but ye must do so and so; you must not be troubled with that fretting foolish Thing ye call *Conscience*, ye must make bold with that, ye must do my Service, and I will give you a Heaven upon Earth. Yea, but says Christ, I will overbid him, I will give you eternal Life just for the taking; if ye will lay hold on it, 'tis yours: I seek nothing of you, I will make you holy, ye must keep my Commandments in Point of Gratitude for your Redemption; and without Holiness, ye cannot see me; but that is not your Title to eternal Life. Thus the Lord overbids Satan, and engages his People to holy and pleasant Obedience, as the Way to eternal Life.

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I come now to some Application of this; and it serves in the first Place for information in these Things; *viz.*

1. It informs us of the Largeness of Divine Bounty to all his People. O that's a sweet Word, *Psal. cxix. 17. Deal bountifully with thy Servant.* And *Ver. 65. Thou hast dealt well with thy Servant.* *q. d.* Of a Truth thou hast been a very kind Master to me, I dare not say, but I have got infinitely more than I deserved. Sometimes David sits down in an Extasy of Wonder, crying out, *And is this the Manner of Man, O Lord! And what can David say more?* Has he loved me from Eternity, has he given his Son, and sent his Spirit, and will he give me a Heaven? *Thou hast dealt well with thy Servant.* Here is the Divine Bounty indeed! Truly God is good to Israel: Of a Truth, we think ye are saying very right, *Psalmist*; for he is even good; yea, and very good to Israel.

2. It lets us see the Difference betwixt the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace: The Covenant of Works requires personal, perfect, and perpetual Obedience, as the Condition to give Title to life: And the Man performing his Course of Obedience might have claim'd Heaven and Life by his Works; and thus had a *jus quasitum* upon God, so as he might say, Now, I have wrought my Work, give me my Wages: But the Covenant of Grace says, Here is a mere Gift, here is a
Heaven

Heaven for the taking: I know I will make you holy, and ye will be holy; but your Obedience is not the Title to Life: The Covenant of Works was mostly made up of Precept, and if ye perform them, ye shall have Life, *do, and ye shall live*; but the Covenant of Grace is mostly made up of Promises, *I will make you live that ye may do*. *Do, and ye shall live*, says the one Bargain; *LIVE, and ye shall do*, says the other Bargain. The Man does not, yea, dares not come to God, and say, Now, I have been holy, I have repented, I have delighted in thee, and been humble, I have suffered for thee, I have prayed, I have heard, &c. And therefore, on this Score, give me Heaven. No, That is not the Way of the Covenant of Grace; but the gracious Soul says, My elder Brother has done and suffered for me, he has purchas'd a Title to Heaven for me; now, I plead it upon that Score, and that thou, Lord, mayst help me all my Life to express my Thankfulness, by a Course of holy Obedience. There is the Odds between the two Covenants. In the Covenant of Works, Life comes by Works, in the Covenant of Grace, Life comes by a Gift. By what Law is Boasting excluded? By the Law of Works? No, but by the Law of Faith. Man would have Matter of Gloriation, if he got Heaven by his own Works, and might say, as *Grevincho-vius* said to *Paul*, when the Apostle puts the
 Questi-

Question, 1 Cor. iv. 7. *For who made thee to differ from another?* The insolent Arminian answers, *I my self made my self to differ.* Adam had Grace, and by that Grace he might have stood, yea, but he could fall also; but Believers are established in the Way of God, and are kept, by his Power, through Faith unto Salvation.

3. It lets us see the Evil, and cursed Nature of Unbelief, that will lose Heaven wilfully, and will not take it as the Gift of God. Had the Lord said unto you, *Ly a Thousand Years in Hell, and then I will give you an Offer of my Heaven, ye would have thought that a very hard Task:* But now he says, *Here is a Heaven, as it were, brought and laid to your Doors, here is a Covenant of Grace well ordered, and made up, and the whole Model of it is contriv'd by my Wisdom and Love, lay hold on it. I will not have it, says the Unbeliever.* O! this is damnable Wickedness and Ingratitude, even to a Prodigy! Man is condemn'd to die, and the King sends him an Indemnity. *I will not have it, says the Man: that is the Case of Mankind. Ye will not come to me (says our Lord, John v. 40.) that ye may have Life.* Will they not come? Where will they go then? Why, they choose Death and Hell, rather than eternal Life.

Secondly, It serves for Consolation unto the Lord's People, against several Evils. Is Heaven

ven a mere Gift, then it gives Comfort unto God's People, under the Sense of their own Unworthiness. Ye will not believe what a Sense of Unworthiness will do to a godly Person, when the Freedom of God's Gifts is out of Sight, it will even sink and swallow up their Peace. The Want of the Faith of this great Truth in Exercise, that Heaven is a mere Gift, will be like a Gangrene to their Peace, tho' they should be so wise, as to take cheerfully what is so liberally given them. *Abigail* was no Fool, when *David* sent to propose Marriage to her; she might have said, O! will he marry me, a poor unworthy Creature? What am I? a Farmer's Wife! I am not worthy to wipe the Shoes of *David's* Servants; yea, but she steps forward for all that, embraces the Offer, and took him for a Husband. Whatever the Sense of your Unworthiness be, let nothing discourage you; Heaven is a Gift; and altho ye do not deserve it, yet your elder Brother deserves it, having paid for it, and bought it; therefore ye may cheerfully take it.

2. It gives Comfort against the afflicting Sense of Defects and Short-comings in Holiness, which is, and ought to be one of the greatest Troubles of the Lord's People; their Complaint is, O to be holy! O, if this cursed hellish Guest, the old Man, the Body of Death that is within the House of Flesh might be killed, then I would be well: Therefore I groan

groan, I cry, I pray, I repent. O! what shall I do? O! wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me? here, I say, is Comfort, that Defects of Holiness will not keep you out of Heaven. No, it will not: I hope I am not sewing a Pillow under the Arm-pits of any, or encouraging Folk to turn the Grace of God into Wantonness. No, I am speaking to the Godly, who are exercised under a Body of Death, and complaining for want of Holiness: And to you I say, Be not discouraged, there is a Time coming, when ye will be perfect, and among the Spirits of just Men and Women made perfect: The Lord will perfect all that concerns you, and will, ere long, stab the old Man to the very Heart, and give him such a Blow, as he shall never recover. Heaven is not given to such only, as are eminent for their great Degrees and Measures of Holiness: But as a Spark of Fire is as real Fire, as the whole Element of Fire, and a Drop of Water is as really and properly Water, as the whole Ocean; so, if ye have real Faith working by Love, and that Love producing Holiness and new Obedience, with Singleness and Sincerity of Soul mourning over your Defects, honestly designing and endeavouring to perfect Holiness in the Fear of God. In that Case, I say, be not discouraged; God will give you eternal Life, notwithstanding your manifold Failings and Short-comings. Bless God for the Reality of
Grace

Grace wrought in your Hearts, and be endeavouring to be still shewing the Fruits of it more and more in your Lives and Conversations. Mean Time, be not discouraged, ye know what was said of *Abijah* the Son of *Jeroboam*, *1 Kings* xiv. 13. *Because there was found some good Thing in him toward the Lord God of Israel; therefore he shall go to his Grave in Peace.* In Allusion to this, can ye not say there is some good Thing in your Hearts toward the Lord? Dare ye say it in his Sight, ye love him above all, and ye are broken with your own whorish Hearts. Well, God will give you Heaven; and therefore, do not sink under Discouragements; for Heaven is a Gift, a mere Gift. When ye are Discouraged, because ye have done nothing for God, and are in your own Eyes as useless Members; and though ye have been studying to do all ye could for him, yet ye have done little well: Heaven is not got for your Works, but for Christ's Works, who did, and died for us; *And through him eternal Life is the Gift of God; not for Works of Righteousness which we have done.*

3. It gives Comfort against all Challenges whatsoever: O! what Challenges, Doubts and Fears do even the Lord's People labour under many a Time? They tell me of a great Man of this Church, who was indeed a good Man, and wrote several learned and pious Books, who, upon his Death-bed, had many Chal-

Challenges, great Fears and Terrours about his eternal State; and a Country Man coming to see him, says to him, Pray Sir, what Way would you have Heaven? Is it, because you would be so and so holy: Believe it, *The Gift of God is eternal Life.* The very Text supported and comforted him, and thereby he got Deliverance from his Fears: So that eternal Life must be a Gift, whatever be my Sin: So *David* sings, 2 *Sam.* xxii. 5. *Altho my House be not so with God.* There comes the Challenge; yea, but the free Covenant comes at the Back of it, *Yet hath he made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all Things, and sure.*

Thirdly, and *Lastly,* It serves for Exhortation. And

1. If Heaven and Eternal Life be a Gift, then, for Christ's sake, *accept* of it: It is one of the crying Sins of *Scotland*, that we get repeated Offers of Christ, yet, alas, few accept of him. The old Complaint may be still renewed, *Who hath believed our Report?* Will ye not accept of a Gift, even the best Gift that God hath to give you? He cannot give you a better Heaven, he cannot give you a better Christ. What would ye be at? It is surely some mischievous Ignorance, Enmity, Security, Presumption, or Worldly-mindedness, that keeps Folk from accepting of such a Gift. I exhort you to accept of it cordially, *Lay hold*

on Eternal Life, and upon the Hope set before you.
 Ye that are young Folk, consider there are many young Folks dying from among us at this Time, and therefore be exhorted to lay hold on eternal Life. Ye who are old Sinners, will not ye embrace him? For Christ's sake will ye clasp about the Throne of Grace; be persuaded to take the Mercy-Seat in your Arms. What will ye do? Will ye swear on, and drink on, and whore on? Will ye continue in breaking the Sabbath, cheating your Neighbours, and neglecting your Duty, and then in the End a Fever, or some other Disease, comes, and down to Hell ye must go, and that eternally. O rather come, come and fly to him, lay hold upon him, accept of the Gift; I do not clogg it, by requiring your gracious Qualifications before ye come. Come all ye that labour, all ye that spend your Money for that which is not Bread, and are thirsting after the Creature. Come ye that are laden with the Wrath of God, that are loaded with Sin, whatever ye be, whatever your Sins be: If you were a Witch, or a Wizard, yet O come, and take Life, even that great Blessing of Eternal Life.

2. Ye must not only *accept* of the Gift, but I exhort you to accept of it as a Gift, under that very Notion and Consideration. Not only accept of Heaven, but accept of it as a Gift: Yea, that is the main Thing; and it ever the Lord save a Man, he will do it so as

to empty him of himself, so as he will be made to say, There is nothing in me, nothing that ever I did or can do, will do my Business with a holy God; I am nothing, I can do nothing, I can hope for nothing: But O! is Heaven offer'd to me as a Gift? Why, then even as a Gift I will take it, I lay hold upon Eternal Life as a Gift.

3. Secure the Gift, when once ye have laid hold on it. Ye will say, How shall we do that? Many Things might be said in answer to it; I shall only tell you one sure Way, and that is, Commit it unto himself. This was Paul's Way, 2 Tim. i. 12. *I know whom I have believed, and I am perswaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that Day.* I committed my Soul unto him; for I was in the Midst of Snares, and I foresaw many Difficulties in my Way to Heaven; but I know whom I have believed, and what I have committed to him he will keep; our Life is hid with Christ in God; our eternal Life is well secured by the Three glorious Persons of the God-Head, and we acquiesce in that Security, *Our Life is hid with Christ in God.*

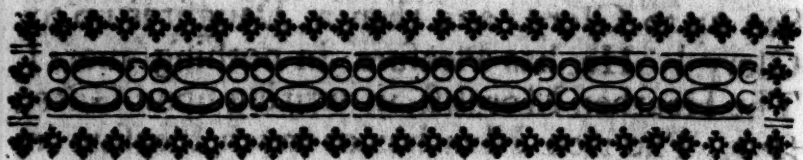
4. Is Heaven a Gift? Then, Believers, what will ye give him back again? Will ye give him nothing? What have we to give, say ye? Indeed ye have nothing to give, in Proportion to what he gives you; But ye
L 1 must

must give him something as a Token of your Gratitude; and therefore give him your Hearts, and your best Affections: give him your Wives, Husbands, Children, when he calls for them: Give him your Time, spend a considerable Part of your Time in the Work of Religion; yea, give him your very Lives, if he calls for them. Does he give you Eternal Life, and will not ye part with a Natural Life for him, that ye may go to him, and be for ever with him. The Martyrs of old loved not their Lives unto the Death: Give him your Reputation, let it be trampled upon, let your Names be sunk for ever, if that can give Glory to God. Give him all you are, all you have, and all you can.

5. Admire the free Grace of God that he should treat you so. I'll tell you, Sirs, there is a Twofold Pleasure God has with respect to Believers; he has a Pleasure in devising Heaven for them, and he takes a Pleasure in conferring it on them: And, if we may speak so, with the most profound Reverence, he has as much Pleasure in bestowing Heaven on his People, as in any Work that ever he did. It is a sweet Word we have, *Luke xii. 32.* and worthy the Believers serious and frequent Meditation, *Fear not little Flock, for it is your Father's good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom.* It is not only an Act of Free Grace, nor is it only an Act of Sovereignty; but O! he gives it with

with a great deal of Pleasure and Good-will!
 What Pleasure hath he when he takes now a
 Son up to Glory, and then a Daughter up to
 Glory! He has Pleasure in nothing more!
 The Heathen Moralift, in writing upon Gifts,
 fays, The rich Man has as much Pleasure in
 giving, as the poor Body has in receiving:
 But O the Delight that God has in giving a
 Heayen to the tossed and weary Sinner! *There*
remains a Rest for the People of God. Come
 and fit down upon a Throne ye that can hard-
 ly get a Footstool upon Earth; ye were toss'd
 up and down while ye were below, come, and
 fit down with me upon my Throne. What
 will the poor Body think then? He rejoices
 over us to do us Good upon Earth, and will
 he not rejoice over us in perfecting our Good?
 O fit down, and wonder, and praise for ever-
 more.

L 3 SER-



S E R M O N X.

R O M A N S VI. 23.

Eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ARCHIMEDES, the great Mathematician, sought only a Place whereon to stand and fix his Instruments, and thereupon promised to move the whole Earth out of its Place. Philosophers seek only a *first Principle*, and from that they derive all others. JESUS CHRIST is the *first Principle*, and the only and great Centre of all revealed Religion; and it has been the great Defect of most of all the Systems of Divinity, that they never took Pains enough to derive all the Branches of Christianity from *Christ Jesus*, and to centre them in his Person. The Apostle Paul, in his Sermons and Writings, was much in establishing this, and particularly in the Text, where he says, *The Gift of God is eternal Life through*

through *Jesus Christ our Lord*. In speaking to this, I shall, *First*, Consider the Import of the Phrase, how Heaven is through Christ, derived from him, and centred in him. *Secondly*, Shew you in a few Particulars, how the Papists have overturned the whole Scheme, both of Heaven's being a *Gift*, and a *Gift through Jesus Christ*. And *Lastly*, Draw an Inference or Two.

As to the First of these, consider,

1. The *Election* unto Life is in Christ; we are chosen to Life in him, *Ephes. i. 4. According as he hath chosen us in him, that we should be holy, &c.* *Arminians* pretend that this makes for them; For, say they, if we be chosen in him, God saw us in him, and that is only by Faith; he saw us believing, and by believing to be in him when he chose us. But we say, It is very plain from the Bible, that our Faith is the Effect of Election, and not the Cause of it; and it is likewise plain, that the Death of Christ is the Effect of Election, and not the Cause. What means that then, *Chosen us in him*? It means this, That Christ is the great Root, and we, as the Branches in the Root, are chosen in him. He is the first Elect, and we elected in him: He is the Fundamental and Meritorious Cause of all the Blessings of Election, but not of the Decree it self. The Decree of Election is owing to no other Cause but to the Good-will of him who

did Elect, and yet the Execution of that Grace and Good-will is laid upon Christ, by whom God decreed to dispense that Salvation.

2. The Eternal Transaction in the Covenant of Redemption about our Life, how to bring it about, how to purchase and apply it, was with Christ; the Council of Peace was between Father and Son, and the Proceedings of that Grand Cabinet-Council marked and registrate in the Archives of Heaven. About what is this Council held? Even concerning some of *Adam's* Race. Why, then it might have been thought, surely the Result of that Council is the Destruction of Apostate Man, even as God designed to destroy the Fallen Angels. No, the Result of the Council is *Peace*; it is the Council of Peace, to bring back the Enemy to Peace, to slay the Enmity, and to reconcile the Elect World to himself; the Council of Peace was to give Life through *Jesus Christ*.

3. The Covenant of Grace, which promi-
seth Life, and giveth Faith as an Instrument
to lay hold on it, that is made in him: The
Covenant of Grace, that New Covenant, is
founded on his Blood. It is the new Cove-
nant in his Blood. He is the Mediator of the
Covenant going between the Two Parties,
and, in that Covenant of Life, promising Life,
and giving Life in Abundance. Our Lord is
the Messenger of the Covenant, he comes from
God

God with the glad News of Heaven and Eternal Life; he is the Witness of the Covenant; he knew and was Witness to all the Transaction; and he is the Surety of the Covenant, he undertakes for the Father, and for us. This Covenant of Grace that promises and brings Life, is founded upon the Blood of Christ; and therefore this Eternal Life is through *Jesus Christ* our Lord.

4. The Offer of this Life is in him, and by him: We therefore, as Ambassadors for Christ, intreat you to be reconciled to God, and to accept of Heaven and Eternal Life, the Offer whereof is made to you by him. It is not our Offer, Sirs, it is Christ's Offer. It is he who bids you turn and live; it is he who saith, *Whosoever will, let him turn and live; look unto me by Faith and live.* It is his Offer as really as if he were in the Pulpit. Do not look upon silly, contemptible and weak Men as the Persons ye have to do with; for the Offer of Life is in him, and by him.

5. Our Title and Right unto that Life is by him. The Gift is from him, and the Right and Title by the Gift of Righteousness unto eternal Life is by him. Settle this as a Principle of Religion in your Souls, That all our Right and Title unto Heaven is wholly by Christ's Righteousness: He has opened the Door again, which we had shut upon our selves, and he has manifested the
new

new and living Way, by his Body and by his Blood.

6. The disposing, the preparing, the fitting of us for Life, is from him : The Son quickens whom he will. Spiritual Life is an Earnest of this eternal Life ; it is a Pledge of it, and it is a Part of it, and Christ gives it : *He quickens whom he will.* It was a biting Taunt that Luther cast upon the Church of Rome, when expounding that Word, *Gal. ii. 20. The Life that I now live is by Faith in the Son of God, &c.* 'O! says he, such a gross Heretick as Paul has been, who speaks never a Word of Merit here, but only of Christ, *The Life that I now live is by Faith in the Son of God.* The Spiritual Life, whereby we are prepared for the Possession of eternal Life above, is from him.

7. The securing of this Life for us, and the securing of us for it, is from Christ. O Sirs, this is the very Soul of the Gospel. I will not give a Halfpenny for all the Divines in the World, if they take not in this that I am preaching to you as a Part, and the main Part of what they teach : He secures eternal Life for us, and us for it; he prepares the Inheritance for us: All the Angels in Heaven, with their united Power, their Skill and Good-will, could not dress up one Chamber in Heaven for the meanest of the Elect; but he does it. And then, he secures us for it, we are kept by him

him for it. This is great Consolation, That our Life is hid with Christ in God; and, *Because I live ye shall live also*: There is no Security beyond that, 'Till I die again ye shall never die. God the Father has sworn, That I am a Priest for ever after the Order of Melchisedeck; that is, that I shall not die and have Successors, but that I shall live for ever an endless Life; and your Life is secur'd by that, *Because I live, ye shall live also*. Ye are in my Hand; my Father and I will keep you close and safe; no Man, no Devil shall pluck you out of our Hands; no Temptation, no Desertion, no Weakness, no Folly, no Persecution shall pluck you out of my Hand. Many a Pull will Men give, many a Pull will Devils give, and many a Pull will Lusts give; but none of them all, nor they all together, shall ever be able to pluck you out of our Hands, we have secured you for that eternal Life.

8. He is the Object of this Life; he is the Thing they call The Objective Happiness of his People; that is, it is in his Presence we live, it is by him we live, it is upon him we live; it is in the Sight of this Lord Jesus we are happy, and rejoice in him above for ever and ever.

9. All the Ways whereby eternal Life is given and brought about, they are all by Christ Jesus our Lord. He brings about this Heaven and

and Eternal Life Three Ways. (1.) By Price: This the *Socinians* deny; but we need not digress, to prove, That Christ's Death was a Price, a Ransom for the Sins of the Elect, and a Satisfaction paid to Justice, in order to make an Attonement to an offended and angry God: The whole Bible runs in that Strain, both Old and New Testament concur in that, that we are bought and saved by a Price, and it is the Blood of Christ that is the Price. (2.) We are saved by his Power: This *Socinians*, *Arminians*, *Pelagians*, and *Papists* deny. We teach in Opposition to them all, That Christ's Power must be exerted in a Day of his Power, in order to make his Redeemed willing to be saved from their Slavery to Sin and Satan: We are not like the Slaves in *Algier*, they are so weary of their Slavery, that they long to be home. Their Cry and Expectation is, O! will not our Friends and Countrymen send a Ransom for us, that we may be delivered? And when the Ransom comes, they leap for Joy: But it is not so with Mankind; for we are Slaves, and yet mad on our Slavery, we love our Chains, and are courting our own Misery; and tho' the Price be told down, and tho' Christ has satisfied, yet Men will not come out of their Chains: They love the Devil their Master so well, that they would be content to have their Ears nailed to the Post of his Service for ever. Well, says Christ, will

I lose my Blood? Will I go and die in vain? No; for, every one that I have died for, I will have a Work of Power upon them, I will break their Fetters, I will knock off their Chains, I will assert their Liberty with a strong Hand, and I will bring them out. Now, it is Christ's Power that does it, for so the Promise runs, *Psal. cx. 3. Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power.* (3.) The actual Collation, or bestowing of this Life upon them, is by Jesus Christ our Lord. *My Sheep hear my Voice, and I give unto them eternal Life,* John x. 27, 28. *Come ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom.* Matth. xxv. 34. The Father has given him a Power to give it, and all that believe on him shall have it.

10. And *Lastly*, Christ is this Eternal Life it self. *This is the true God and Eternal Life;* 1 John v. 20. O! that is a confounding Scripture to them that deny Christ's God-head; such as that profane *English* Doctor of Divinity, that was before the Higher House for his Heresy, and yet he was never bid Renounce it, only not to Preach it: How is he confounded with that Text, *This is the true God, and Eternal Life?* He is the ALL of Heaven. *John* says, *Rev. xxi. 22. And I saw no Temple therein, &c.* Now observe it, the Book of *Revelation* runs much upon Visions, and these Visions much upon Temple Visions, in Allusion to old Temple Service. Yea, but says he, when

I looked up to the higher House, I saw not a Temple there: Q! what comes of them then? Yea, the Lamb is the Temple; there it is in him, and by him, they worship God. I saw no Sun nor Moon there, there was no Day and Night there, no Vicissitude or Changes there; yea, there was nothing but Meridian Light there: and what was it? Why, *The Lord God and the Lamb was the Light thereof.*

We come now to touch a little upon the cursed Scheme of the *Romish Church*, whereby they pervert the whole Doctrine of the Gift of God's being eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. We have no great Pleasure in Controversy: But to establish you in the Faith of this great Truth of free Grace by Christ, we must give you some little Account of it.

First then, They confound Justification, whereby we have a Title to Life, with Sanctification, whereby we are made meet for the Possession of that Life: And therefore, (2.) They have a two-fold Justification, the *first* and the *second*. The *first* Justification with them, is that, whereby an unrenewed Man is made godly, an ill man is made a good Man by the infusion of the Habits of Grace. The *second* Justification, according to them, is that, whereby a good Man is made a better Man, by repeated Acts, meritorious Acts. (3.) They distinguish between the *Fault* and the *Guilt*: It is true indeed, according to
found

sound Divinity, they may do it; for there is an Imputation of our *Guilt* upon Christ, but no Imputation of the *Fault*, as *Antinomians* say; but the Church of *Rome* makes a Distinction between the Guilt of the Fault, and the Guilt of the Punishment; and they make it thus. That tho' God Pardon my Guilt of Sin, yet the Guilt of Punishment remains, which is Non-sense; for the Guilt and the Punishment because of Sin, it is the Chain that ties the moral Evil and the natural Evil together: The Guilt looks unto the Sanction, the moral Evil; the Sin it self looks unto the Prohibition, or the Obligation to suffer Punishment, because of Sin that is the Guilt, and if that be taken away, there is no Punishment remaining.

But to do them Justice, I'll tell you how far they yield. They own, (1.) That we are all obnoxious to God's Wrath. (2.) That there is no getting of Heaven but by Justification. (3.) That the efficient Cause of Justification is God. (4.) That the meritorious Cause is Jesus Christ; but they are not very ingenuous here; for they turn another Way. (5.) That there is no Justification but what hath Holiness attending it. And they own the final Cause to be God's Glory, and Man's Salvation.

But then, there are two or three Causes, wherein they go mad, such as the formal Cause, which,

which, they say, is that inherent Righteousness of mine, wherewith I stand at God's Tribunal, and appear before him; and for the Sake whereof, he accepts of me as righteous; I have a Right to Heaven, and a *jus quæsitum* upon God, a Claim, by Virtue whereof, I can urge the Lord, and say, Here is my Righteousness, it deserves Heaven, by its intrinsic Worth, it really deserves it, tho' there were no Imputation of Christ's Merit, tho' no Promise made to the Work, yet thou canst not in Justice deny me Heaven; here I produce my Righteousness before thee: And herein lies the mischievous Poison of their Doctrine. Again, they tell us, that a Soul that is fearing Hell, praying, believing, trusting, hoping; these things procure the first Justification; that is, These procure God's infusing gracious Habits in me, and making me, of an ill Man, a good Man; and by the Merit of Congruity, God cannot but give me Grace when I do so and so.

In the next Place, they make their Sacraments the Instrumental Cause of Grace and Justification, especially Baptism and Penance; that is, their Absolution by a Priest. They say, These Sacraments justify us, they confer Grace upon us *ex opere operato*, by the very doing of them; they work Grace in the Soul, as Physick works upon the Body, if we do not willingly

willingly oppose God. And in this they are also guilty.

But beside all these, they distinguish the Sin from the Guilt, and say, That tho' God pardon the Sin, yet the Guilt remains, and we must give Satisfaction for it: And, from this proceed all their Vows, their Pennances, their Pilgrimages, their Alms-deeds, their Donations, yea, and their very Sufferings in Purgatory: And the Song of the Mass is said for such as are there, to Answer the Satisfaction, which the Guilt, not removed in Time, obliges poor Souls to give in that Place. But here they are mightily straitned: For they own, that some Sins deserve ten Years in Purgatory, some twenty Years; and how many of these Sins Men may commit in Forty or Fifty Years of their Lives, they are straitned to condescend upon; but to help the Matter, they say, the Pope he grants Indulgences, and lets them out sooner, and that is some Relief. They say also, That the Intensity and Extremity of their Torment in Purgatory makes Compensation for the Shortness of Time they abide there: So that *Bellarmino* says, *Their Torment being as hot as Hell, they suffer in Three hundred Years, what they should have suffered in the Space of Six thousand Years, by the ordinary Satisfaction.*

And because they know no Man can Merit Heaven, that has so much Sin in him, they imagine, that some Men may have Perfection,

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and

and that Concupiscence or in-dwelling Sin is no Sin, and that venial Sins are no Sins that deserve Hell; but that, of their own Nature, they rather deserve Mercy. But then, because many Men deserve not Heaven, because they have no good Works wherewith to merit it; they therefore bring in some Saints that have many good Works, yea, too many, and these they call Works of Supererogation, when they do more than the Lord requires, and when they suffer more Penance than is required, or needful: All the Excescence, or Superplus, that is, all that is more than what is just needful for themselves, is put in the Church's Treasury, in Order to help others, and the Pope keeps the Key of this Box, and for Money dispenses them at his Pleasure.

Now, this is a short Scheme of the Popish Doctrine, which overturns the Whole of what we have been speaking of. We cannot go to the Detail of it in confuting every Particular; we have said much already, and therefore shall give you only two or three Arguments against this Scheme.

First, It confounds the two Covenants, it makes the Covenant of Grace just a new Covenant of Works. The Covenant of Grace says, *Whosoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely, to him that worketh not* (there is no Merit there) *but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly*, Faith is imputed for Righteousness.

But

But they bring the Covenant of Grace speaking just in the Terms of the old Covenant of Works, and they make Christ, speaking to the rich young Man in the Gospel, to be setting up the Covenant of Works over again, when he says, *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments*, Mat. xix 17. And they bring in these Mat. xx. getting their Hire, as the proper and deserved Reward of their Work. Now, Paul understood nothing of this, when he said, *Phil. iii. 9. I desire to be found in him, not having my own Righteousness*. (there is no Merit there) *but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith*. Never a Man had more Merit, if any Merit could take Place. Never a Man had more Holiness, but he is not justified thereby, he will not trust in it, nor lean to it, he desires to be found in Him. The Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace are intirely confounded by the Papists.

Secondly, Christ, by the Covenant of Redemption, has the Weight of the Salvation of all the Elect laid upon him, their Works on him, their Sufferings on him: He doth all for them, he suffers all for them, in Order to the procuring their Justification and eternal Life. He is their Surety. The Papists will not let Christ do any Thing for us, but only by his Merit, to procure a new Edition of the Covenant of Works, whereby we being set up

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again, may do for our selves. But we with the Scriptures say, He is the Lord our Righteousness: Surely shall one say, *In the Lord* (that is in Christ, not in our selves) *have I Righteousness and Strength.* All his Offers are free; and *whosoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely.*

Again, *Thirdly*, The Consequences of the Popish Scheme are terrible, they dethrone free Grace, and put the Crown on their own Heads. Indeed these were not Papists, of whom we read, *Rev. iv. 10, 11.* who threw down their Crowns before the Lamb, and said, *Worthy is the Lamb that redeemed us:* The Papists would set, and keep the Crown on their own Heads, and thank themselves that they are not damned. It follows from their Scheme, that they, who are in Heaven, are no more obliged to God, than they that are in Hell: For God did as much for the Damn'd, as for these in Heaven, but the one did not so well improve themselves as the other.

Then, again, to say no more, it is the most uncomfortable Doctrine that can be. *Bellarmino*, after he had written his *Book of Good Works*, the very last Sentence of it is, *Now, because Men are uncertain whether they have any Good Works, that are really such, or not; therefore of the Uncertainty of our Works, and the Danger of our Pride, it is safer to rely upon the Blood of Christ, than upon our own Works.* Now, where

where is the Comfort of their Good Works? when they tell me they hope for Heaven by their own Works: and yet, when I ask them, Do ye know if ye have any good Works? they say, we cannot know: They do not know whether their Works be good, or not; we do not know whether we have any Religion, or not. Then, where is all your Trust? where are all your Works of Supererogation, that made up that Treasure, out of which ye could lend to others. It is a strange Thing, that, according to them, the Pope will find Assurance for Men, two hundred Years after they are Dead, and will make others sure their Friends are gone away to Glory, after they have been so long in Purgatory. O! but 'tis an uncomfortable Doctrine; a Man can have no Peace in believing, or practising it; it affords no Quietness to their Conscience: And therefore, several Papists, in a dying Hour, have been forced to turn Protestants, and to rely only on the Blood of the Mediator.

Now for Inferences shortly, *First*, It gives us a Characteristick of the true Religion. That Religion is true, that gives all the Glory of Life and Salvation to the Mediator, and intirely to the Grace of God through him. And if all the first Errors in Christianity were strictly examined, we should find every one of them to strike against something of Christ, either his Nature, his Person, or his Offices, there

is still some one Thing or other of Christ Impugn'd by them; And therefore, that is one sure Mark of the true Religion, to give all the Glory to Him who ought to have it. *Not unto us, not unto us, but to free Grace in and by Christ be all the Glory.*

And, *Lastly*, O! Employ him in all his Offices: He executes all his Offices to give you Life; by his propheticall Office, he reveals a Life, tells you there is a Heaven, and gives you the Certainty of it; By his Priestly Office he buys a Heaven for you; and as a King, he gives you eternal Life, and applies it to you. And therefore, in all your Duties of Prayer, in all your Returns of Praises and Blessings, and in all your Acknowledgements; O! make use of Christ in every thing.



S E R M O N. XI.

LUKE xi. 8.

—Yet because of his Importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

TH E S E words are the Conclusion of a Supposition which our Lord makes, *Ver. 5.* Which of you shall have a Friend come to you at Midnight, and ask some Loaves, and ye should make Excuse, by telling

telling him, Your self and your Children are in Bed, and at Rest; and therefore ye cannot rise: But your Friend tells you, I will be affronted, if ye do not rise and help me; for a Friend of mine is come to my House, and I have nothing to give him. Now, for the better understanding of this, ye would consider, there were no Inns, or Change-Houses in Judea; but Travellers got a Pass, or Recommendation from one Friend to another, when they had Occasion for a Journey. Accordingly, the Man is supposed here to say, *A friend is come to me now at Midnight, and I have Nothing to give him: What shall I give him? What shall I do with him? Must I starve him? I must have Something, I will not go away without mine Errand. And therefore, because of his Importunity, he will rise, and give him as many Loaves as he needeth.* It is observable, the Word in the Greek for *Importunity*, signifies *Impudence*: Because of his *Impudence*, Shamelessness, which will take no Refusal, but for an Answer, will have a Grant of what he seeks. They say, it is a Metaphor taken from a Beggar, who, when he gets a Denial, *Go your Way, you can get Nothing at this Time.* Cries again; and when refused again, yet still cries, and cries on, and knows no Shame, but an Alms he will have: *Because of his Importunity, &c.* The great Design of this Way of speaking, is, to encourage the Lord's People

in the Duty of Prayer, and that they should never give it over, because it will have a sweet Issue.

Observe then shortly, *Importunity in our Addresses to God in Christ will never fall short of Success, but will prevail, and be effectual, and at last obtain its Design.*

Holy Importunity in our Addresses to the Throne of Grace, through a Day's-Man, will be effectual, will prevail, will never fall short of an Answer: *Because of his Importunity, he will rise, and give him as many as he needeth.* Not only one, or two; and tho' he was seemingly a little impudent in seeking; yet his Friend will be the more liberal in giving; take you more and more Loaves: The poor Man is seeking but three. Well, but, I tell you, Man, I will not only grant you these, but as many as you need; yea, I will give you all you can desire. *Importunity prevails mightily with God, for obtaining every Thing we can want, or seek.* Jacob says, *Gen. xxxii. 26. I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.* That is a very bold Word: Where got you Strength to retain your Maker, to prevail over your God? It was the uncreated Angel, who was at this Time wrestling with Jacob, and Jacob is resolved not to part with him, nor to quit his Hold of him, till he get all that his Heart can wish; and therefore says
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peremptorily, *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.*

In speaking to this, I shall use this Method.

1. Shew you what the Nature of this *Importunity* is.

2. Prove that it is a Duty to be importunate in Prayer.

3. Shew whence it is that the Lord's People are helped to it.

4. Prove, that *Importunity* in our Prayers, through Christ, never fall short of Success.

And, 5. Shew you whence it is that *Importunity* is so prevalent.

Let us see then, in the *first* Place, what the Nature of this *Importunity* is, by considering what it presupposes, and then, what it more formally includes.

It presupposes, That People may have a strong, transient, and passionate Desire after spiritual Objects, and yet want this *Importunity*. I have heard many on a Death-Bed cry out with the greatest Vehemency, *O, for Pardon! O, for Delivery from Hell! O, to have Heaven!* and yet, through the whole Course and Tenor of their Lives, they had no Religion, and I could see no Convictions in them, with Respect to Sin, even when dying. There must be the Habits of Grace, upon which this *Importunity* is founded; and the Spirit of God lays these Habits in the Heart, and in Prayer, breathes

breathes, and blows upon them, and thence flows this Importunity.

But then, for the more full and formal Understanding the Nature of this Importunity; There are in it these Things.

1. Strong, lively and vigorous Desires after Christ, and all the Blessings of the new Covenant: The Man lifts up a wishful and observant Eye; O! when will he come? he lifts up his Voice, and lets Heaven hear his Cry; he lifts up his Hands as a Token of the Vehemency of his Heart, which hath this Language; *Tea, my Heart breaketh for the Longing it hath to thy Judgments at all Times.* There is the holy Vehemency the Man lifts up in Prayer. When the Spirit of God comes, the Prayer is lifted up, it is a *lifted up Prayer*; whereas at other Times, when this *Importunity* is wanting, there are Mists of Darkness, Plumets of Formality, Weights of Deadness and Unbelief hanging upon the Prayer, and drawing it downward. When the Soul is importunate, it is lifted up in Prayer, as the *Psalmist* says, *Psal. xxv. 1. To thee I lift my Soul, O Lord.* That is the *first* Thing in this Importunity, even the vigorous Desire going out to God, and to Christ, and to every Thing about him.

2. There is in this *Importunity*, that which in the Scripture is called *παρρησία*, or, a *Liberty of Speech*. The Apostle says, *Heb. iv. 16. Let*

us come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, with that *Liberty of Speech*. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty; a Liberty of Speech, and a Liberty of Argument: The Lord, as it were, summons all the Faculties of the renewed Soul to stand before him, to come and be fix'd, to come, and be established on him, to come, and be center'd in him: And he commands them not only to attend, but to be drawn out in all their Acts, and gives them a kind of Rhetorick, and *Freedom of Speech*, whereby they plead with God. A Believer that has got the Grace of *Importunity*, he will use Arguments that would surprise a Person that were over-hearing him, who was not himself acquainted with the Spirit of Prayer. No Invention, no Gift in the World could suggest such Topicks: He will then plead upon the NAME of God with *Joshua*, And what wilt thou do unto thy great Name? He will plead upon every Attribute, and cry, Give me this Blessing, and that Blessing, and the third Blessing, upon the Score of such and such an Attribute. He will plead upon the *Mercy* of God. *Is thy Mercy clean gone?* He will plead upon God's *Faithfulness*, *Does thy Promise fail for evermore?* He pleads upon the *Relation* wherein God stands to him: Will not a Father give to his Son? yea, will not even a wicked Father give to a Child? Or, will he give him a Stone for Bread? Now, if even a wicked

wicked Man, with the natural Bowels of a Father, will be kind to his Children, what may we expect from a kind, indulgent, benign and merciful Father? What will not he do? He is my Husband, and will he let me be ruin'd? I am his Bride, I am his Spouse, and will he let Devils and wicked Men destroy me? He is my Father, he is my elder Brother, he is my Portion; yea, he is my A. L. L. and will he suffer me to be destroyed? Will he deny me my most importunate Prayer? No. Thus I say, there is a holy Rhetorick in the importunate Soul's pleading with God, upon the Account of the Relations wherein God stands to his People.

3. In this *Importunity* there is a *Positiveness*, and an holy *Peremptoriness*, to have our Request, and the Errand we come for. I grant indeed, the importunate Soul seeks to submit to holy Sovereignty, and to acquiesce in that uncontroll'd Dominion of God, and whatever he does with him, he seeks to lay his Hand on his Mouth, and his Mouth in the Dust, and to be silent, and dumb, because he hath done it who doth all Things well, and can wrong none of his Creatures: He has taken a Husband from me, he does me no Wrong; he has taken a Wife from me, a Child from me, an Estate from me, he does me no Wrong; yea he has taken my Reputation from me, and still he does me no Wrong, *Good is the Word,*
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and good is the *Will of the Lord*, he has done all Things well, and I have no Quarrel, nor dare I suffer my Heart to rise against him in all this. Now, I say, tho' the Godly Soul will seek an holy Submission to all the Lord is pleased to do with him or his, yet there is also an holy Positiveness which God allows to his People, and is the very Thing which in the Text is called *Importunity*. And one of the most notable Instances of this in all the Bible, is that of the Woman of *Canaan*, *Matth. xv. 22,--29*. She comes running after Christ, Christ hides himself from her; yea, but he could not be hid, she still smell'd the Savour of his perfum'd Garments, and this led her to the Place where he was; she comes, and cries, and cries again, till some of the Disciples began to think shame of her, and to say, Truly Master, this clamorous Woman will shame us all, dispatch her Business, and send her off. No, not a Word; she cries, she roars; Why, what's the Business? The Business! Would not any Body roar? the Devil is in my House, the Devil is in my Daughter: She cries to him, but gets not one Word of Answer. Yea, but that will not do, Lord, I will not, I must not give it over so, I shall make Heaven ring with my Cries ere thou and I part. What! Must I go home again to the old Devil, to fight with him? No, no, I hope I have fallen on the Remedy now. She cries on; and when at length

length he speaks to her, truly one would think his Answer is worse than Silence. What says he? Woman you are not within my Commission, you may even spare your Breath, what needs all this Crying? You are but a Pagan Dog, out of my Commission, *I am sent only to the lost Sheep of the House of Israel.* That was an unanswerable Objection, and she could say Nothing against it, and yet she would not give it over, but cries, Lord help me, call me what thou wilt, a Crumb this Day I shall have; I do not pretend to the Childrens Bread, nor will I sit down at Table with them, but a Crumb I will have; Lord Jesus, thou and I shall not part till I get it. There was *Importunity.*

The *second Thing* proposed was to prove, That this *Importunity* is a great Duty; and for clearing it, consider,

1. God not only commands the Substance, the Body, and the external Part of the Action, but he likewise commands the Manner how it is to be done, both come under the Command; and it is the Ruin of the most Part of the World that they do not consider this. Why? we ruin our Souls with formal Praying, formal Preaching, formal Hearing; we look on the external Part of the Action to be commanded, but consider not that the Internal comes under the same Command, and from the same Authority; therefore it is, that we
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do not Pray as we should, we do not Preach as we should, we do not Hear as we should. But believe and consider it, the Command reaches the *Manner*, as well as the *Matter* of the Action, the *Importunity* of the Address, as well as the *Address* it self. We have a very strange Word, *Rom. xv. 30. Now I beseech you, Brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the Love of the Spirit*; there is a very great Solemnity prefacing in the Thing he is seeking, and he is seeking it with a great deal of Fervency: Now, what is it? *That ye strive together with me, in your Prayers to God for me.* Not only that ye pray for poor Paul, for persecuted Paul, but *strive together with me, Agonize together.* The Greek Word for Strive, is the same with what is used to express Christ's being in an Agony in the Garden, when all the Hells of the Elect were upon him, when Millions of Talents of Vengeance were in his Cup, when he was sweating Blood in a cold Night, and deprecating the Cup, he was in an Agony, *And being in an Agony, he prayed more earnestly, (Luke xxii. 44.)* Now, says Paul, Pray with the same Earnestness that Christ prayed when under the Wrath of his Father, and for God's sake do it, and for the Love of the Holy Ghost do it. In every Prayer we ought to pour out the Heart.

2. Much *holy Importunity* in Prayer is a great Duty, because the Person we Address is Great
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and Glorious ; the glorious Greatness of that Majesty before whom we are, when we pray, challenges this of us ; he is a sovereign Spirit, and therefore we ought to address him with our Spirits ; he is the infinitely wise God, and we must not *offer to him the Sacrifice of Fools* ; he is the living God, and therefore we must come lively and vigorously before him, and not with a sleepy and sickly Service ; and the Spirit of God must be employed to make us lively. The *Persians* worshipped the Sun, and the Sacrifice they offered to the Sun was an Horse ; their Reason was, they said the Sun was a great Racer, he Courses round the World every Four and Twenty Hours ; he is an active God, and we will give him an active Sacrifice, and therefore they offer'd up to him a winged Horse, not an Ass, that dull and unclean Creature. The Use we Christians ought to make of this, is, to endeavour to give a Sacrifice some way suitable unto, and worthy of that great and glorious God to whom we approach : For if our Prayers die between our Lips, and never go to the Roof of the House, we are like the Ass, or rather we offer to the Lord *a corrupt Thing*, and thereby fall under the Curse of the *Deceiver*, spoken of, *Mal. i. 14.*

3. Consider the Extent and Vigour of Man's Soul, and the Faculties of it. I have often told you, and you want to be told it often, That the Soul of Man is next to the Nature
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of an Angel, and is the most active Thing that ever God made. Matter, a Body, these three Dimensions of Length, Breadth, and Depth, make up but a precarious Being, and that which is next to no Being, if compar'd with the Soul of Man. We are ready to think, a Spirit is but an airie kind of Thing, a Phantasm; but there is more Reality, more Activity, and more Vivacity in one Spirit, than in the whole Material Universe. And should we then carry away these Powers and Faculties, and bestow them on an Idol, or a Vanity? And when we come to address the Living and True God, should we leave these Faculties behind us, as *Abraham* left his Servants at the Foot of the Mount? No, the extended Powers and enlarged Faculties of the Soul, were never given us to pour out upon the Creature, and to deny them to the most High God. *Importunity* must be a great and unquestionable Duty, where all the Faculties of the whole Soul are employed in the Addressing such a great and glorious God.

In the *Third Place*, we come to shew, whence it is, that Believers are helped to be *importunate* in their Addresses to God. And for the right understanding of this we would consider, That the Believer has Two Intercessors, one without, and another within him: The Lord Jesus Christ is the great Lord Advocate and Intercessor without, he pleads upon a

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Bargain made with God, thereby declaring his Concern and Sympathy with his People. But then there is an Intercessor within the Man, even the Holy Ghost, who worketh this Importunity in the Soul these Ways.

1. By making the Man sigh and groan forth Desires before the Lord, when many a Time he knows not what to ask, or what is best for him: Hence the Spirit of God says, *Rom. viii. 26. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our Infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: But the Spirit it self maketh Intercession for us, with Groanings which cannot be uttered.* Take heed how ye understand this; the Holy Ghost sighs none, groans none, but he makes the Believer do both: His Intercession is real and effective: O what a heavy Lump would the Soul be, if the Holy Ghost did not give it Wings! It is his Breathing and Working in the Hearts of his People that begets this *Importunity*.

2. He makes them *importunate* by enlightning them, and letting them see their Wants. O what dreadful Wants! They want Light, Life, Strength, Joy; they want Pardon of Sin, Grace and Glory: Yea, sometimes he pinches them with some Temporal Wants, that thereby they may come to consider of their Spiritual Wants, and thereby brings them to an *Importunity*. See in the Case of *Hannah*, she was sorely pinch'd and distress'd, her Rival,

Rival, the other Wife, upbraided her for her Barrenness; for the *Jews* thought Barrenness was a great Curse, because, until they knew clearly what *Tribe Christ* was to come of, every Woman expected to be the Mother of the *Messiah*. Well, *Hannah* gets an Opportunity of coming to God's Tabernacle, and she pour'd out her Soul by *Importunity* before the Lord. *Eli* thought she was a Woman in her Cups, and was angry with her, and severely rebuked her: Where, by the Way, we may notice the Partiality of the Priest; his own Sons were guilty of Adultery, Fornication, and Sacrilege, but there was never a Word almost to them, but a very general Hint, *Sons, it should not be so*; whereas, the honest Godly Woman, full of *Importunity*, pouring out her Soul to God, meets with a severe Rebuke, *You are a drunken Wife, How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy Wine from thee*. Indeed no, my Lord, says she, you are mistaken with me, *I am a Woman of a sorrowful Spirit: I have drunk neither Wine nor strong Drink, but have poured out my Soul before the Lord*. 1 Sam. i. 14, 15. There, you see, the temporal Pinch brought her to *Importunity*. And what think ye of *Manasseh*, when among the Thorns? Ye read 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11. *Wherefore the Lord brought upon him the Captains of the Host of the King of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the Thorns, and bound him with Fetters, and*

carried him to Babylon. Verse 12. *And when he was in Affliction he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his Fathers.* And Verse 13. it is said, *Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God.* Whether these were material Thorns Manasseh was catch'd in, that is, some Bush or Thicket where he had hid himself; or figurative Thorns, intimating his Perplexity of Mind, the Confusion of his Council that advis'd him to this Course, which at length brought him (as we use to say) *into the Briars.* Whatever it was, he was (it seems) brought to an importunate Crying unto God, and to an humbling himself greatly before the God of his Fathers.

3. The Spirit of the Lord helps to this *Importunity*, by discovering to his People, in a saving Light, the *Worth* and *Value* of spiritual Blessings. What is the Value of Pardon of Sin, is not known to most Part of such as speak of it: It is a *First Rate* Blessing. He lets them see that his Loving-kindness is better than Wine, better than Life, and therefore makes them pant and long, grip and grasp after it. When he discovers the true Worth of spiritual Blessings to them, this draws out their Hearts, and makes the Soul to cry, *O! I must have this, I must have it; this Light, this Heat must be darted down upon my dark, cold and frozen Heart; I cannot live without*

without it: And this brings the Soul unto that *Importunity*.

The *Fourth Thing* proposed was, to make it appear, that this *Importunity* prevails with God, is effectual, and (if I durst say so) has the Ascendant over God. It is founded on these Words in the Text, *Because of his Importunity he will give him as many as he needeth.* A Man may have all the other Privileges of a Christian, and yet not have free Access to God, and an Answer of his Prayers at all Times: He may be united to God by Faith, he may be a Child of God, justified, reconciled, adopted, sanctified, and a real Friend of God; and yet the Lord may, at some Times, refuse to answer his Prayers: We see the very Case supposed here in the Text, The Man will not rise out of his Bed to give him the Loaves, *because he is his Friend*; No, that will not do, nor prevail with him, tho' he be a Friend: What then? Because of his *Importunity*: There it is. A Godly Man may come to regard Iniquity in his Heart, (*Psal. lxxvi. 18.*) and then the Lord will not hear him. A Godly Man may come to be untender in his Walk and Conversation, and then the Lord will not hear him. A Godly Man may become dull and dead, Lifeless, flat and formal in Prayer, and so, in that Case, God will not hear him. But when a poor Man is helped to *Importunity*, by the Spirit of Life which is in

Christ Jesus, and is helped to pour out his Soul into God's Bosom, in the Exercise of Grace, when he is helped to use Arguments that always prevail, then, because of his Importunity, God will grant him all that he needeth. It is true, Parables and Similitudes are not to be squeez'd further than their Scope will allow, and we should take heed lest we stretch or press them too far : Nor are we to think, that there is any Thing without God that can move him to pity poor Creatures, but the Grounds and Motives of all his Mercy and Love are to be sought and found only in himself. We should know also, that where the Lord intends to give a Mercy, there he stirs up the Soul to an *importunate* seeking after it ; and where he keeps the Soul in an *importunate* Frame of seeking, there is still good Ground to hope, that at length he will either give the Thing sought, or that which is every way as good. God has wisely and mercifully connected *Seeking* and *Finding*. *Jer. xxix. 13.* *And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your Heart.* Ye must not seek me without the Heart, ye must not seek me with a divided Heart, but with the whole Heart, and then I will be found of you ; ye must be *fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord*. The Greek Word for *Fervent*, is *Boiling*, like a Pot boiling on your Kitchen-fire, intimating, that the Soul in all Performances, and in every Branch

Branch of Duty, should be like a boiling Pot, *servant in Spirit, serving the Lord.* The Lord, I say, has establish'd the Connection between the Act of *Seeking* on our Part, and the gracious Act of *Granting* on his Part; that is, between our Seeking and Obtaining. The Apostle *Paul* has a very sweet and emphatick Word, when in the Pannel before *Agrippa*, *Acts* xxvi. 6, 7, 8. says he, King *Agrippa*, I am now to be Exam'n'd and Catechiz'd upon a great and fundamental Point, *viz. The Resurrection of the Dead*, I can assure you, O King, I never deny'd the Resurrection, I am a *Pharisee*, and I firmly believe and teach the Resurrection; yea the whole Twelve Tribes believe it, they have the Promise of it. And Verse 7. *Unto which Promise, (viz. of the Resurrection) our twelve Tribes instantly serving God Day and Night hope to come.* The Word *instantly* in the Greek signifies *striving*, as a Man when stretched or extended upon a Rack, O what Pain, and what Struggling to be disengaged and disintangled! That is *Importunity*.

Again, if we consult the Experiences of all the Saints in Scripture, we will find it an evident and certain Truth, that wherever they were helped to *Importunity*, they always obtain'd the Blessing, either by getting the individual Thing they were seeking, or as good, if not a better Thing instead of it. And if any challenge the Truth of the Doctrine from

their own Experience, that they pray, and their Prayers are shut out, let them check and blame themselves, and see what is wrong within; for Unbelief will not, cannot do: Yet the Experience of the Lord's People runs thus, *This poor Man cried, and God heard him; he cried, there was Importunity.* It is not a crying with the Voice, but a crying with the Soul. The Lord said to *Moses* at the Red-sea, *Wherefore criest thou unto me?* *David* says, *Out of the Depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.* *Jonah* says, *Out of the Belly of Hell cried I, and thou heardst my Voice.* That indeed must have been a loud Cry, that could make God in Heaven to hear him praying in Hell; yea, but his Prayer reached Heaven, and came in before the Lord, even into his holy Temple, *Jonah* ii. 7. The Belly of Hell (says he) was my Oratory, or Place of Prayer: But was you not too late, *Jonah*, with your Prayers? Had you not been better praying and preaching in *Nineveh*, praying before and after your Sermon there, where you might have done Good to others, than to be praying out of the Fish's Belly. True enough, might he have said, but better late thrive than never; and as unworthy as I was to be heard or accepted, yet when I cry'd out of the Belly of Hell, the Lord heard my Voice. He cry'd with *Importunity.*

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The *Fifth Thing* should have been spoke unto, was to give some Reasons why the Importunity of his People always prevails with God, is still effectual, and never falls short of desired Success; *Because of his Importunity he will give him as many as he needeth.* I give only Two Reasons in a few Words.

1. Because this *Importunity* (as I said) is owing to the Holy Ghost, it is dictated by the Spirit of God; it is not the Man's Voice, the Operation is not owing to the Man's own Spirit, it is the Holy Ghost that works it in him. Now, when the Holy Ghost dictates a Bill, and presents it, will not God regard the Dictates of his own Spirit, who is God equal with Father and Son? The Spirit of God works in the Man, and the Man finds his Spirit elevated above its natural Strength, he finds the warm Breathings and Influences from above, exalting his Soul above it self, and these Dictates of the Spirit must and will have Success. And this is no *Enthusiasm*, or *Quakerism*, as some Scoffers may alledge, who are acquainted with neither Scriptures, nor with the Power of the Spirit of God.

2. The most *importunate* Believer in the World trusts not to his *Importunity*, but to the Intercession of the Great Angel of the Covenant. He puts his most importunate Prayers and Duties in that golden Censer, where the
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Blood and Incense of the Lord Jesus is; And how then can it fail of Success? If a Man get these Two, the Holy Ghost to dictate his Prayers and Requests for any Blessing, and Jesus Christ the Great Lord Advocate to present them, God cannot deny him.



SERMON XII.

ZECHARIAH vii. 12.

Tea they made their Hearts as an Adamant-Stone; &c.

OUR Prophet preach'd about the Time of the Building of the Second Temple, after the Captivity, and we see here what a Character he gives to the Delivered. Sometimes God delivers not, till a People reform and turn to him, at other Times he will bring them out of the Furnace, when their Dross is with them; and indeed it was so here, for the liberated *Jews* had very much Dross about them: They had, 'tis true, thrown

thrown off much of their Idolatry, and to this Day were never guilty of Backsliding into that Sin, but many Things else were wrong among them. What a dreadful Picture of them have we here in the Text? The Lord gives us a very sad Character of them, when he says, *They have made their Hearts harder than an Adamant-stone, &c.*

The Heart of Man is the whole Soul of Man, but here especially it is the *Will* and *Affections*, for the Predicate agrees best to it, *a hard Heart*. The Heart is either the best or the worst Thing in Man; if a Man be unrenewed his Heart is the worst Part of him, and if he be regenerate his Heart is the best Part of him: It is the Center, whence all Actions and Operations flow. Their Hearts are here called *hard*, it is a Metaphorical Expression taken from the Hands of Mechanicks, that by much Working become brawny, callous and insensible, or the Travellers Heel that has no Feeling; the Heart is hard when the Conscience is past Feeling. It is not every Degree of Hardness the Prophet complains of, but of a superlative Hardness, *hard as an Adamant* or Diamond; the Adamant is the hardest of all Stones, it will cut Glass which no Metal will do, and yet the Stone it self can scarce be cut but by the Powder of it self: But neither is that all that is complained of here, but that which compleats the dreadful

Figure

Figure is, they made their Hearts so ; they were not merely passive, but they made their Hearts as the Adamant-stone, that is, they had an active Hand in their own Obduration.

Ye will see many People that have very little Religion, who will yet complain of a hard Heart upon a Death-bed ; but, in very Truth, they do not understand what they complain of : I believe the main Thing they mean is, they are not weeping much, and that is all they understand by it, and many Times they are not directed to him that can soften it. Some say, the Blood of a Goat can soften the Adamant, and it is only the Virtue of the Blood of the Lamb of God that can remove the Heart of Stone, and give an Heart of Flesh.

For understanding then what is meant by this Hardness, I shall,

1. Speak a little to you of the Nature of this Hardness.
2. Give you some Distinctions of this Hardness of the Heart.
3. Consider the Hardness, with respect to these Things should soften it.
4. Consider it with respect to the different Periods of the World.
5. Give you some Reasons of this Hardness of Heart.
6. Draw

6. Draw some Inferences. I pray you seek to understand it, for it is one of the greatest Evils we labour under, and one of the worst Evils in God's Sight.

First then, This Hardness has this in it, the Man is unsusceptible of all Divine Impressions, whatever God does, makes no Impression upon him: The Word, upon which God has laid out all the Treasures of Wisdom and Goodness, when it falls upon the hard Heart, it is like Water falling upon a Rock, it runs just off again without any Impression. The Authority of the Word doth not move the hard Heart, the Reasonableness of the Precepts doth not touch the hard Heart, the Sweetness of the Promises does not affect it: God speaks of the Joys of Heaven, the Terrors of Hell, the Love of God in his Son, but none of all these Things move. O, what a Quarry is this Heart digg'd out of, that nothing affects! God has not a better Heaven to move it, God has not an hotter Hell to move it, God has not a better Son to allure it; yet nothing moves it, it receives no Impression. (2.) The hard Heart is unsusceptible of any Impressions from the common Motions of the Spirit. I do own the effectual Operations will do it, but no other will conquer the hard Heart. The Spirit of God strives with some Folk, he repeats Convictions, Warnings, Motions and Challenges,

Challenges, and says to them, Ye shall not go to Hell without a Struggle with me; ye shall not get fair Leave and full Liberty to go, but I shall stand in your Way to tell you of your Danger, The Spirit of God deals with the Man, as the Angel did with *Balaam*, he stood in the Way to stop his Journey; so the Spirit of God does: But the hard Heart surmounts all that Opposition, and conquers all these Motions. It receives no Impression from the Mercy of God, God has made us, we are his Children, yet the hard Heart makes us Rebels against a Father; he is our liberal Benefactor, he is our constant Preserver and a glorious Redeemer. These are strong Obligations, and one might think they would melt a Heart; No, the Heart is Proof against all these; the Judgments of God will not do it, *Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive Correction; they have made their Faces harder than a Flint, they have refused to return.* Jer. v. 3. I have dipt them, as it were, in Hell, may the Lord say, yea, but the Heart is as hard as it was; the Fire will soften Iron, but the Fire of Hell will not soften a hard Heart. *Ahaz* is branded with this, *That in his Affliction he trespassed yet more against the Lord,* 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. (3.) Hardness of Heart consists in this, The Man is insensible of all that is done to him, for him, and in him

him. The Scripture speaks of a Set of Folk that are past Feeling, *Eph iv. 19.* Are they past Feeling? They must be dead then: For a Man may lose the *Smelling*, much of the *Tasting*, and yet live; but if he lose all his *Feeling*, he is a dead Corpse. The Guilt of Sin is an insupportable Burden, the Wrath of God is an insupportable Burden, the Vengeance of a broken Covenant, the Justice of God pursuing for all these; yet the hardened Sinner feels none of all these Weights, of all these Burdens he is past Feeling. (4.) The Man is inflexible to all the Exhortations that God gives him, he will break, but he will not bow. We have an eminent Instance of this in hardened *Pharaoh*, he hardened his Heart, God sent him a Message with Orders, *Let my People go*: No, it will not do; he threatens him with a dreadful Plague, if he will not let them go. He stands it out, the Plague comes, he is a little softened. When the Plague is removed, and a Mercy comes in the Room of it, he hardens again, a new Plague comes and he is softened; and yet all these alternate Plagues and Mercies could not conquer his Hardness: He did, in a Manner, defeat God's Judgments ten Times, for so many Plagues were inflicted upon him, before his very outward Hardness was so far conquer'd as to let *Israel* go. (5.) This Hardness of Heart consists in resisting the Motions of the Spirit; this

this Resistance is a kind of Repercussion, as when a Hammer beats upon a hard Thing, it rebounds and turns back the Hammer; there is a Re-action in Resistance, and, as some Mathematicians say, as much as there is of Action upon such a Body, that Body reverberates as much, and has as much Influence upon the acting Body: As when a Horse draws a Weight at his Heels, the Weight draws him back, and has Influence and Re-action upon him, as much as he has in drawing the Weight forward. This Hardness of Heart has a Resistance in it; the Proto-Martyr *Stephen* charges the Posterity of this People in the Text with Resistance, *Acts* vii. 51. *Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your Fathers did, so do ye.* Our Lord exhorts his People, not to cast Pearls before Swine, that is, do not imprudently bestow your Exhortations upon them that have a kind of reprobate Hardness; for they are like the Swine, they will turn upon you and rent you. So the Prophet *Hosea*, Chap. iv. 4. complains, *My People are as they that strive with the Priest.* What is his Business to strive with the People, he should warn them of their Danger, and thereby shew his Love to them. True, but when he does it, they resist him, Counter-argue with him, and impugn what he says.

Secondly,

Secondly, Let us consider the different Kinds of Hardness: There is a natural Hardness; there is a contracted Hardness; there is a judicial Hardness, a voluntary Hardness, and a passive Hardness. (1.) Natural Hardness seized on the Heart as soon, as ever *Adam* opened his Heart to the Devil: for then all Softness abandoned it; God had no more Interest there; and all could be done, except the Application of effectual Grace, could not move the Heart of *Adam*; the Man's Heart is like soft Wax to the Devil's Seal; but it is like a hard Rock to God's Impressions; and thereby he gets a Heart of Stone; and this stony Heart is transmitted to all his Posterity: It is the Consequence of the Fall, that is the natural Hardness. (2.) There is a contracted Hardness: When Men are habituated to a vicious Life, when Men repeat Wickedness, and commit Folly over and over again; this contracts a Hardness: For every deliberate Sin weakens and lessens the Fear, Awe and Dread of God, and makes the Man the more hardened. (3.) There is a judicial Hardness: God is frequently said in Scripture to harden Folk. The *Jesuites* and *Arminians* have a strong Controversy with the Reform'd, about God's Way of Hardening; they deny, that God has any Hand in it; but the Man does all: Yea, after he is hardened, they maintain, That the Will has a Power yet to do good, even under
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the Stroke of Hardness. We assert, That God has many Ways of Hardening; but we must not exclude the positive Induration; he hardens, by withdrawing softening Influences, and so the Heart of Man is like a Piece of soft Wax; ye need nothing more to harden it, but to take it away from the Fire, and it hardens of Course. There is a Withdrawing of softening Influences; there is a giving of Men over to the Devil, and to their Lusts, and then Satan gets his will of them, and they are given up to strong Delusions, to believe lies. *My People would not hear my Voice, Israel would none of me; wherefore I gave them up to their own Heart Lusts;* and these harden a Man; every Lust hardens a Man, and the Lord hardens by a Course of Providence, which Sinners abuse to harden themselves. When *Moses* works a Miracle for softening of *Pharaoh's* Heart, the Magicians, they ape him, and they seem to do the same Thing by their *Lieger-de-main*, which *Moses* wrought by the mighty Power of God; it was not really working of a Miracle, which they did. The Magicians did so by their Inchantments; and *Pharaoh* hardens his Heart, and says, as it were, *Now I prove Moses, ye have no Divine Mission; for I will let you see, that my Pagan Priests can do it as well as you.* But then, there is a positive Hardening, when a Man is given up to the Sway of his Corruption; God has

a supernatural Way of hardening the Heart; which he inflicts as a Plague and Punishment for his former Hardness; the natural Hardness is the Consequent of *Adam's Fall*; the contracted Hardness is the Effect of our Sinning; the judicial Hardness is a Consequent of God's hardening; *I will harden Pharaoh's Heart, that he shall not let you go.* (4.) There is a voluntary Hardness, when the Man will not see, he will not hear, he will not understand. It is a dreadful Commission which the Prophet *Isaiah* gets, *Chap. vi. Go tell this People, in seeing they shall see, and not perceive, in hearing they shall hear, and shall not understand, &c.* And in the Words going before and after my Text, *'They refused to hearken, but pulled away the Shoulder;* in the Hebrew it is, *they give a withdrawing Shoulder.* When they seem to bring in their Shoulder to God's Burden, to take on his Yoke, they go back, slide, and run back from him; this the Man willingly works upon himself, and really hardens himself. *Why will ye die?* Yes, we will die, we will not serve the Lord. (5.) There is a passive Hardness, which is often the Case of the Godly Man, when the Lord is not shining in him, when his Breathings are withheld, when his Operations are restrain'd; the Man, as it were, by a Necessity of the State of his Soul, cannot have that Softness, that Life, that Light, that Out-going of his Heart after God, as at other Times.

This, I say, is a Hardness that even the Lord's People may ly under.

Thirdly, Consider this Hardness with Respect unto the moving Objects, the glorious Revelations of God, the transcendently excellent Mysteries of Divine Wisdom that should ravish the Heart, they do not move it at all; there is a Hardness with Respect to Revelations: Then the Command comes, and enforceth Obedience; and what doth the hard Heart say? We will not serve the Lord: There is Hardness with Respect to the Command; and then, after they have transgressed, and deliberately committed Wickedness and Villany; they say, *We have not sinned*, like the Whore that wipes her Mouth, and says, *I am clean, I have done no Iniquity*. That is indeed a dreadful Length, when, to Disobedience, Men add Contumacy, and, to Contumacy, they add Impudence; and when Impudence steels their Resolution, to go on in a Course of Sin, whatever the Event may be.

Fourthly, Consider this Hardness with Respect to the different Periods of the World. For Sixteen hundred Years, and more, the whole World was hardened, except a very few; and God sent a Deluge of Water, to steep their Hearts in, and to see if that would soften them. I know indeed, Divines make a Distinction betwixt the People of Sodom, that were burnt with Fire, and the People of the old

old World, that were drown'd with the Water of the Deluge: They are called, indeed, the ungodly World; yet Commentators say, It is probable, That when the Deluge was coming apace, and gradually advancing, some got Grace to repent, and turn to the Lord: Though they were the ungodly World, as to the Majority; yet some got Repentance: But for these of *Sodom*, they suffered Whole-sale the Vengeance of eternal Fire. They were hardened, and they were steeped in the Deluge: And as there was great Hardness then; so, even at the great Day, there will be little Softness found: For Christ says, *When the Son of Man comes, shall he find Faith on the Earth.* Well, he will burn them, and the Fire of Conflagration will be used, to see if that will soften Mens Hearts. Again, under the old *Mosaick* OEconomy, from *Noah*, till Christ's Days, O! what Hardness was among Men! The Prophets still complain upon their Disobedience, upon their Rebellion, and upon their Enmity. And when the Son of God himself comes, when a God incarnate preaches, the Hardness still remains. Ye will not see a more angry Expression of Christ's Indignation in all the New Testament, than about Hardness of Heart; where 'tis said, *Mark iii. 5. He looked round about on them with Anger, being grieved for the Hardness of their Heart.* His Divine Reasoning could not bind them, his

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Works

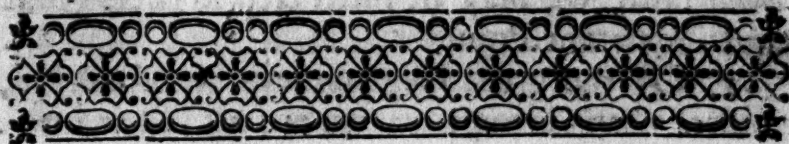
Works of Miracles could not soften them ; he looked round about among them, there was scarce one to better another, and he was angry and grieved for the Hardness of their Hearts : And very justly was he grieved.

Fifthly, As to Reasons, I shall at this Time condescend only upon one Class of them ; and that is, the particular Kinds of Sin that harden the Heart : Their Hearts were hardened with the Deceitfulness of Sin. Sin is a great Cheat, a great Deceiver, it is vail'd over with some artificial Disguise of Pleasure, Profit, or Honour ; the Bait takes, Men venture to commit Sin, and so are hardned : Small little Sins, if we may speak so, compar'd with others, when they are wholly neglected, the Man has no Government of his Spirit, lets all these go unmortified, does not mourn for them : These contract a great Hardness. The Grains of Sand are small ; yea, but when they are contracted together, they will make a great Rock ; The Particles of Water are so small, that the Magnifying Glass, which will make a Thing appear two thousand Times bigger than it really is ; yet could never find to see the Particles of Water, they are so minute and small : And yet, when they are all together, they make a very Ocean, as big as fills the Surface of the *Terra-aqueous* Globe. The Particles of Vapours and Exhalations they make the great Winds and Hurricanes. When People have a great many sinful

ful wandering Thoughts, and many other Sins neglected, not confest, not mourn'd over, these come, by Degrees, to increase the Hardness. Again, on the other Hand, gross Sins, Sins of the first Magnitude, Sins that have great Malignity attending them, Sins that are committed with most cutting and killing Aggravations; these deforce and debauch the Conscience, and make a great Gash in the Soul, and bring on a great Hardness: *David's* Adultery and Murder made such a Gash in his Soul, that he could never get it fully heal'd again; his last Days were worse than his first; Sins against Light, presumptuous Sins, O! how hardening are they! And therefore, *David* cries, *Psal. xix, 13. Keep back thy Servant also from presumptuous Sins.* It is a Metaphor taken from an high mettal'd Horse, that cannot be kept in; and therefore, *Keep back thy Servant.* Sinning deliberately, and with a high Hand, is very hardening, and a Believer is not freed from it, only the Power of God's Grace in Exercise can keep back from that Sin. *David's* Sin was of a very hardening Nature, and real; and through Repentance, seems to have been, for a while, out of Doors with him: For nine Months Time, and till the Child was a dying, he had not thoroughly repented of these Conscience-wasting Sins. Pleasant Sins are not easily repented of: For they harden the Heart. Whatever Pleasure a Man has in Sin, when he

comes to get a soft Heart, he must have a proportionable Bitterness to lay in the Ballance with it; and the Grief he has for the Sin, must outweigh all the dreggy Delight, and Criminal Pleasure he had in the Sin: And that is a hard Work. *Augustine* says of himself, *Before I got Religion, says he, I thought, a Man could not be happy without Uncleaness, or else without a Wife:* O! but pleasant Sins are hardening, and hard to be repented of: And therefore ye will see lascivious Folk generally die as they live, with scarce any Conviction or Horrour for their Sin. Again, profitable Sins are very hardening. If a Man get some Thousand Pounds a Year, by tricking and cheating, will ye get him to repent, think ye, of that? O! it is hard; for if he truly repent, he must give it all back, and that is not easy for him. These, and the like, harden the Heart; and nothing but the Blood of Christ can soften it.

S E R.



S E R M O N XIII.

Z E C H A R I A H vii. 12.

Tea, they made their Heart as an Adamant Stone.

WE told you at the last Occasion, what the Nature of this Hardness is, and that it includes *Four Things* in it: A hard Heart is a Heart unsusceptible of Divine Impressions, an inflexible Heart that will not bow, an insensible Heart, and a Heart that resisteth and deforceth all the Means of Grace. We told you also of several Kinds of Hardness, such as a *natural* Hardness, an *acquired* Hardness, a *judicial* Hardness, and a *voluntary* Hardness; to which might be added, a *partial* Hardness, and a total and final Hardness.

But we come now to make some Improvement of what has been delivered. As,

First,

First, For Information: From what has been said, we may be instructed in these great and important Points .

1. Of the great Degeneracy of Mankind, and of that Corruption we are all fallen into: *Adam* knew nothing of a hard Heart; all the Powers of his Soul lay open to the Revelations of God. When God delivered a Truth to him, he gave intire Credit to it; when he gave him Commands, he was ready to obey them; when he gave him Promises, he Embraced them without a Doubt or Scruple; and when he gave him Threatnings, he had a holy Trembling at doing any Thing to bring the Threatning upon himself: Whatever Appearance God would have made, he would have ador'd him in them. But, alas! we are now the very Reverse of all; nothing now will do it; his Revelations now get no Credit; his Precepts we cast them behind our Backs; his Promises are but like vain Flattering Words, and no more; we make a kind of Theatrical Diversion of his Threatnings, and speak of them only, that we may know them: Impending Judgments are all despised, and the History of what he has done to Sinners is but laugh'd at, and makes no Impression. O the Degeneracy of Mankind!

2. It informs us of the hard Task that Ministers have in their Work. Why so? We are to bring Water out of a Stone; or rather,
to

to get a Heart of Stone pull'd out of the Breast, and a Heart of Flesh put in the Room of it. They that are Engravers of precious Stones, they find it very difficult to work upon them ; and they make but little Progress, who work upon the Diamond ; they make use of the Powder of the Stone to cut it self ; and, O ! how little get they of it in a great Space ! And, it is even so with Ministers ; their Task is hard, who, for most Part, are made to travel much on little Ground : It is, as if a Physician were called to a Man that had a great Stone in his Bladder, and many Stones in his Kidneys ; and if common, or possible, to have also a Stone in the Heart, he would think he had a hard Province of it, to remove the Stone, and save the Patient : And yet this is just our Case ; we have to do with Men that have a Rock in their Breasts. We may allude to the unadvised Words of *Moses*, *Num. xx. 10.* *Hear now, ye Rebels, must we fetch you Water out of this Rock ?*

3. It lets us see why Conversion makes so little Progress. Why ? as we were just now saying, we are working on the hard Stones, and will not get a Grain of Dust from them, it may be, in many Days, tho' working all the Day. It is not easy to convince a Sinner, that there is a Stone in his Breast, it is not easy to humble him, to bring him to his Marrow-bones, to bring him to a free and full Confession of what he really is. It is no Wonder Conversion
on

on be a slow Work, and make no great Advances, we have to do with a hard Heart.

4. It lets us see the Necessity of a Law-work, and that we must bring the Fire of Mount *Sinai* to melt this Stone. It requires a great Fire to melt the Stone, out of which Iron is brought. O! Is it any Wonder, that Ministers preach the Terrours of God, and flash the Flames of Hell in Sinners Faces! Why? Nothing else will soften the Heart; yea, and neither will that prevail; the Law and the Gospel both have enough ado with it.

Secondly, It serves for *Exhortation*. O! be prevail'd upon to resist no more, to stand out no more; God will have the Victory over you in the Issue, and it were even as good, yea, better, to let him have it now with your own Consent. Will any harden himself against God, and prosper? No, he will not succeed; Down therefore with your Top-sails; he has used gentle Methods hitherto with you, to overcome the Stupidity and Obstinacy of your Hearts. O what gentle Methods has he used! He has bid Ministers say, Turn ye, turn ye at my Reproof; and if ye will not do it, our Souls shall weep in secret Places for your Pride. O Sirs! Let him bring down that Stubbornness of your Souls in Mercy, otherwise he will pull it down with a Vengeance, whether ye will or not. Hardened Sinner, resist no more, habitual Drunkard, harden thy
Heart

Heart no more ; Swearer, Sabbath-breaker, Contemner of Family-Worship, Deceiver and Cheat in your Employment, O! harden your Hearts no more ; give up with all these, and let Christ conquer you, and subdue that Obstinacy. Consider in Time the Evil of this Temper, or rather Distemper of Soul, what an evil, I say, this Hardness of Heart is.

1. It is a Sin against the Remedy. This is a certain and uncontested Truth, that Sins against the Gospel have more killing Aggravations attending them, than Sins against the Law. Now, hardening of your Hearts is a Sin against both Law and Gospel, when free Grace is offered, when a Display of a Mediator is made, and ye are not concerned with it, do not lay hold upon him, but harden your Hearts, that ye may not be converted : O ! what an Aggravation is this ; all other Sins may be pardoned, but final Hardness cannot be pardoned ; final Hardness binds all other Sins upon you, and makes them damnable, and is a Mark of Reprobation ; when the Bellows are burnt, and the Lead is consumed, the wicked is not taken away, then reprobate Silver shall Men call them ; for the Lord hath rejected them, *Jer. vi. 30*. Like some Pieces which the Gold-Smith can make nothing of, he throws it away, it will not be good, it is reprobate, vile and bad ; all Means bestowed upon it are in vain, the Prophet prophesies in
vain

vain, and the Founder melteth in vain : So, that this Hardness is a Sin against the Remedy.

2. This Hardness of Heart is a direct fighting against God, and a combating with him, as we see plainly in the Case of *Pharaoh*, God and he, as it were, enter the Lists one with the other; God sends him a kind Message at first, and says, *Man, let my People go, they are not your People, ye have no Interest in them, ye have no Right to command them, let them go.* This was a kind Message, and he backs it with a Miracle, that will not do: Then comes the Threatning; *I see my Terms of Peace are not accepted, then have at you Pharaoh, you and I must to it;* and the Lord sends a Miracle, and in the Miracle a Vengeance; and then *Pharaoh* begins to stoop a little, and to think upon letting them go; yea, but he hardens again, and the other Miracle comes, and he is softened; and when the Stroke is removed, he hardens again: So that ten Times he defeats, as much as could, the Design of the Almighty God, and fights, till at length he is overcome: So, the hardened Sinner fights and combates against God; but however the Pot-sheard may strive with the Pot-sheards of the Earth, yet, let not Man strive with his Maker, *I/ai. 45. 9.*

3. There is nothing more abominable to the Son of God, than this Evil of Hardness of Heart; there is no Sin in the World more pro-

provoking to the Lord Jesus, *Mark iii. 5.* He looked round about upon them with Anger, being grieved for the Hardness of their Hearts. He scarce saw a soft Heart in all his Audience; he looked round about upon all his Congregation for a soft Heart, and could not see it; and he is angry and grieved for the Hardness of his own People; *He came unto his own, and his own received him not*; they were hardned like Devils against him; against his Person they objected, What! this sorry Fellow, the Son of a poor Lase, and a poor Carpenter! Is this the great *Messiah*, of whom the great and august Prophecies of old spoke so much? No, they could believe Fire to freeze, and Ice to burn assoon, as to believe that he was the *Messiah*; they were hardned against his Doings, when he is working Miracles, and healing the Sick, Oh! say they, he is a Sabbath-breaker; hardned against his Miracles in casting out Satan; yea, he is a Devil himself, and he has been in a Compact with him: And when he is humane and gaining in the World; Oh then! he is a vile Glutton, a Drunkard: And thus they were hardned against him to a Degree, and thus he was provoked by them.

4. Consider what a Stroke it is, to be judicially hardned: Of all the Strokes that ever God inflicted, that of Hardness of Heart is the greatest: He may make you poor, and blind,

blind, and miserable, he may take your Child from you, your Husband from you, your Wife from you, and yet all may be in Love and in Pity; but if he come judicially to harden you, that is terrible. All other Afflictions are like the Deluge, which made *Noah's* Ark to float above; but Hardness of Heart is like Lead, sinking you into the mighty Waters. O! it is the last Plague, when other Things will not do, and when other Strokes are ineffectual; Hardness of Heart is the last and worst, and it presageth, and ushers in moe Plagues: Why will ye be smitten any more? ye will revolt more and more. It brings on irremediable Strokes: *He, that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his Neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without Remedy, Prov. xxix. 1.* O, Sirs, it is terrible! And therefore, for the Lord's Sake, seek to get this woful Indisposition conquer'd; seek a new Heart, a Heart of Flesh: For of all the Guests that ever lodg'd in your House of Flesh, this of the Heart of Stone is the worst and greatest. I shall give you a few Directions, with Respect to this.

1. Seek of God a Sense of the Hardness of your Hearts: A Man must, in some Measure, know the Plagues of his own Heart, before he be rightly convinced of a lost State; the Heart does not feel its own Hardness, but ye must feel it; the Lord must give you his Spirit,

Spirit, to make your Souls feel that Hardness, and felt Hardness is real Softness; felt Dark-ness is real Light; and felt Deadness is real Life; I say, felt Hardness is a Degree of Softness: And therefore seek a Sense of it.

2. Lay your Souls open to the Word. *Is not my Word a Hammer that breaketh the Rock in Pieces?* Jer. xxiii. 29. Yea, it will break the Stony Heart in Pieces: 'Tis true indeed, there may be a Breaking of the Heart, and yet the Stone may remain; for take a Stone, and break it into Ten Thousand Pieces, and make it like Sand or Powder, every bit of that is a Stone; because the Whole of that is made up of that which they call Homogeneous Parts; all the Powder is still made up of small Stones. Until,

3. Ye come and lay hold upon Christ by Be- lieving, and so get a Heart of Flesh; it is the absolute Promise, and ye may plead it, ye are not excluded, and there is no Exception made, see Ezek. xi. 29. *And I will take the stony Heart out of their Flesh, and will give them an Heart of Flesh.* Here ye are not excluded, nor excep- ted; and therefore go to Him, and tell him, Lord, here is a Promise made to Christ in Be- half of the Elect; I am a poor ruin'd Sinner, and I urge the Promise, perform it for me, and in me, and give me the Heart of Flesh.

4. Take frequent and repeated Looks of a Crucified Christ, *They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn.* Zech. xii. 10. Look

ye unto him whom ye have pierced, and mourn ;
yea, look unto him whom ye have pierced, and
turn, and amend. After ye have believed,
take repeated Views of a bleeding high Priest
upon the Cross.

5. To help you to this Softness, I would
have you to think frequently upon the *four* last
Things ; serious Meditation upon *Death*,
Judgment, *Heaven and Hell*, will have a migh-
ty Influence upon softening of the Heart. If
we were dwelling more upon the Faith and
Consideration of these, our Hearts would be in
a better Frame, than frequently they are.

6. Seek the Intimations of God's Love in
Christ; the Legal Way never melts the Heart
so kindly. No, the Heat of the Fire, and the
Heat of the Sun melts the Wax, and makes it
take on the Impression. Get a Sense of his
Love, get an Intimation of his peculiar Fa-
vour ; see if ye can read your Names in the
Book of Life, and this will melt you down
into a Gospel Softness. The Woman, *Luke*
vii. 38. she wept much, she wash'd Christ's
Feet with her Tears, she wip'd them with the
Hair of her Head : What says Christ of her ?
She loved much, because much was forgiven her.
The Papists make her Love to be the Cause of
her Forgiveness, and the Condition that
bought the Pardon ; but the very contrary is
true ; for her Love was the Effect of her Par-
don ; for because there was much forgiven her,
there-

therefore she loved much. O! when a Soul sees what it was, and now, what God has made it by his Grace, it will easily then dissolve into Tears, and cry out, O! what am I, that he has made such a Change upon me? I was a Slave of the Devil, and now I am a Son of God, and one of his Children: I was poor, and blind, and miserable, and naked, and now I am full of all Things: He is my Wisdom, my Righteousness, my Sanctification, my Redemption, my Surety, my Lord, my Portion, my All. O! that makes a kindly Melting, and the Heart is loosed and dissolved upon such a sweet Intimation, or Sensation as this.

7. Beware of contracting new Hardness: The Scripture speaks of the Deceitfulness of Sin, *Heb. iii. 13.* — *Lest any of you be hardened through the Deceitfulness of Sin.* What is that? All Sins are Cheats, some of them promise Profit to you, some Pleasure, and some Honour; they cheat you with the Bait, till ye swallow the Hook, and be ruined; but especially small Sins cheat you with their Deceitfulness; is not this a little one, as Lot said to the Angel, (who, I think, was Christ) O! *Let me escape to Zoar, is not this a small City?* This holds true, even in Spirituals; is not this a little one, says the Deceitfulness of Sin; O! this is but a little one, this is not Blasphemy, it is not habitual Immorality. And thus they cheat

the Soul into greater Degrees; they begin to commit some small Sins (if we may speak so; for all Sins are great, in Respect of the Object, tho' comparatively some are less than others) and so they go to Disobedience, to Disobedience they add a Habit, and to a contracted Habit, they add Contumacy, Boasting, Impudence, and Gloriation in their Course, they turn their Shame into their Glory; and thus they arrive at a height of Hardness. There is a very sad and lamentable *Climax*, or Gradation there; and therefore take heed to the very Beginning of Sin, especially guard against presumptuous Sins; for they are very hardning, *Keep back thy Servant from presumptuous Sins*, Psal. xix. 13. It is a Metaphor taken from a high mettal'd Horse, whose Mouth cannot be managed, and that all the Strength of the Rider cannot keep in, but he will go out into a full Carreer: O! says the *Psalmist*, if God leave me, all that is within me will not keep me from running into a mad Course. It is God that has given me the Habits of Grace, that must give Influences of actuating Grace upon these Habits, to keep me back: *Keep back thy Servant from presumptuous Sins, let them not have Dominion over me, then shall I be righteous and innocent from the great Transgression*, Our Hardness, that is a great Transgression: Keep in with the holy Ghost, he is fire, and he will melt, and keep the Heart soft.

In

In the Last Place, it may serve for *Lamentation*; and indeed we have great Reason to lament over the Hardness of this Generation. Of a Truth, I believe, since ever *Scotland* was brought from *Paganism*, and that is about Fifteen or Sixteen hundred Years ago, there were never grosser Abominations to be heard of among Men: People are turn'd not only immoral: but from Immorality, they go to Deism, and from Deism, they run to Atheism, I really dread there is some terrible Day coming; the very Youths are throwing off all common Modesty, and the Force of Education, and take a licentious Liberty to run into Disorders of all Kinds. There are many People who do not believe a Word of the Bible, they do not believe that it is God's Word. O! the Hardness of this Generation! It is hardned in Sin. There are far more disaffected to Church and State now, for any Thing I can understand, than there were at the Happy Revolution; and I think, the very Profession of Professors is on the decaying Hand. They who prayed before in their Families, do pray but seldom now: O! what will be the End of it?

To enforce the Lamentation, consider two Things.

First, Consider that our Hardness is *Hereditary*; there is a great deal of Work about

Hereditary Rights in the World, but here is an Hereditary Indisposition. They say, that the Stone may be hereditary to some Families, the Father may propagate that Disease unto the Son: Sure I am, however it is in the Stone, Gout, or other Diseases of the Body, this Hardness is hereditary to the Soul. The Devil's Venom, the Serpent's Poison, and *Adam's* Sin, they were mingled and baked together, and the Fire of God's just Vengeance suffered them to turn into a Stone, and this Stone is handed down to every one of us to this Day: It came out of *Adam's* Breast, and is in your Breasts and mine this Day. It is an hereditary Hardness, and O it is heavy! Some the Lord leaves, and lets them continue in it, and some he delivers from it, but it is hereditary to all, and it is very sad to consider, that every one of us is born and a Stone in our Breast.

Secondly, To heighten the Lamentation, consider our Hardness is *universal*, and it seems this Hardness has been the Sin of all the Periods of Time. What brought the Deluge in the Year of the World 1656? Just this same Hardness; they hardened themselves until their Bodies were steeped in the Deluge, till God spouted the Deluge out of Heaven upon them, by opening the Flood-gates and letting all drown, so that they were steeped to
Death

Death in these Waters. The honest lively Preacher, that Godly Man *Noah*, preach'd an Hundred and Twenty Years to them, and told them the Danger of Hardness of Heart; yea, but they hardened on still, until they were steeped to Death. Under the Prophets they were hardened; *I sent my Prophets*, says the Lord, *rising early, and sitting up late, but they refused, they turned away the Shoulder, gave a deaf Ear and an Iron Sinew*; that is, they hardened their Necks and Hearts. And when the Son of Man comes, what Hardness finds he against himself! It is wonderful to see the Hardness of the *Jews* against their blessed Lord; and this Day nothing softens us; there is an universal Hardness, not only with Respect to the Subject of Denomination, or with Respect to the Person, but with Respect to the Seat or Subject of Inhesion, as they call it. O this is an universal Hardness! the *Mind* is hard, ye would think that bad Philosophy, but it is sad Divinity, there is a Crust on the Mind. We have seen a Well in *England*, that if ye throw in a soft Body into it, within some Months it will be all crusted over like a Stone; so the Mind of Man has a Crust over it. The *Memory* is hardened; it is said of Christ's Disciples, *they remembered not the Miracle of the Loaves*, for their Hearts were hardened; tho' God's Omnipotency was exerted in feeding so many, yet they remembered it not, for their

Hearts were hardened. The *Affections* are hardened : If we preach the Law to Men, as we are doing just now, the Affections are not moved with it : If we preach the blessed Gospel (as ye heard in the Forenoon) Men's Affections are hardened ; we have piped to you, but not a Soul will dance, tho' it was the best Musick that Heaven could give them ; we have lamented, we have told them their Danger, but neither will that do. Bring a Man out of Heaven, cloath'd with all his Glory, it will not soften your Hearts, it will not fill you with Joy ; bring another Man out of Hell, full of God's Vengeance, spouting Hell out of his Mouth, and roaring under the direful Effects of provoked Wrath, that would not soften your Hearts ; No. Prosperity will not do it, should not the Goodness of God lead you to Repentance ? Should not the warm shining Sun of Prosperity soften you ? No, it will not do it. *After thy Impenitency and Hardness of Heart, (says the Apostle, Rom. ii. 5.) thou treasurest up Wrath against the Day of Wrath, and Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God.* Adversity will not soften the hard Heart : Pound a Fool in a Mortar, he will part with his Blood, he will part with his Flesh, he will part with his Bones, but he will not part with his Sin. Pound him in a Mortar he will not quit his Folly, his dearly beloved Courses, his Lusts, and his Idols. No-
 thing

thing will separate him and them, he is wedded to them, and hardened in them to the highest Degree. And then the *Will* is hard; ye may as well melt Flint with the Breath of your Mouth, as conquer the *Will* of Man; the Spirit of God must do it. I shall give you one Instance of Hardness in a Godly Man, and what may make all the Godly afraid. There are many Godly Folk in *Scotland*, who, tho' Godly, yet are losing Ground; for even the Godly themselves may come to a great Measure of Hardness, of judicial Hardness, of voluntary Hardness, and a sort of Contumacy in it. Ye may look to your Bibles in the Prophecy of *Jonah*: For my Part, I do think, (under Correction) that his Sin was greater than *David's* committing Adultery and Murder; for in his Case, the Man was carried headlong unto the first Sin, and from this Hardness he went to a Second: But here, in *Jonah's* Case, we have the most deliberate Sin and Hardness that ever Man saw. Look to *Jonah* iii. 10. *And God saw their Works, that they turned from their evil Way, and God repented of the Evil that he had said that he would do unto them, and he did it not.* Now, read *Chap. iv. 1.* *But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.* Was there ever the like of that in the World? A Minister sent to preach to a People to Repent and Reform, and who had prodigious Success: For, from the Court

Court to the very Beasts they are all in Sack-cloath, and mourne greatly, and so turning from the Evil of their Ways, their Ruin is prevented; and yet the Prophet is angry at the Success, yea he is mad at it. For my Part, I think, if God should convert all the *Tolbooth* Parish, my Colleague and I would not be exceeding angry at it, but would look on it as the greatest Honour could be put upon poor Men, to be instrumental in such a Work. *It displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very Angry, and he prayed unto the Lord, and said, I pray thee, Lord, was not this my Saying when I was yet in my Country? Therefore I fled before un-to Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God and merciful, slow to Anger, and of great Kindness, and repentest thee of the Evil.* He prays, but indeed it was a very awkward Prayer: Truly, *Jonah*, some few Days before you prayed otherwise; when ye was in the Fish's Belly ye had another kind of Prayer then. And what are you angry at? Are you angry the poor sinful *Ninevites* have got Mercy? Indeed, says he, I told it before hand that thou wouldst repent, and wouldst preserve them. *Jonah* knew this to be the Nature of God, not only from the Light of Nature, which says all Perfections are in God, but from that Proclamation of his Name, which God made to *Moses*, *Exod. xxxiv. The Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, &c.* Now, says he, I knew

knew that thou wouldst not accomplish th
 Threatning, and I had not Will to be reckon'd
 a false Prophet, and to have the Honour of
 my Ministry stain'd ; for I told them, That
 within Forty Days they would all be de-
 stroyed, and now they are not destroyed ! This,
 he thought, was a Tash upon his Reputation.
 What ! his Reputation, which was but ima-
 ginary Air, (for the Threatning was not ab-
 solute) and to put that in the Ballance with
 so many Thousands of poor Things to be cut
 off. Well, *Thou art gracious, therefore now, O*
Lord, I beseech thee to take away my Life from me,
for it is better for me to die than to live. The
 Man is mad, he is crying for his Life out of
 the Fish's Belly, and now when he is safe, and
 had got nothing to trouble him, he now cries
 out for Death, *O let me die.* Indeed one would
 pity the honest Prophet *Elijah*, crying out as
 he sat under a Juniper Tree, *1 Kings xix. 4.*
It is enough now, O Lord, take away my Life. He
 saw nothing but Idolatry prevailing, and he
 could do no Good, he could not succeed in
 his Endeavours to stop the Course of Wicked-
 ness ; and therefore the poor honest and Godly
 Prophet in his Grief cries out, *Remove me.*
 But for a Man that is doing Good, and had
 been the Instrument of the Moral Conversion
 of a whole City, and that because he is doing
 Good, and because they are not all dead, I
 will die ; either they or I must die, let them
 all

all go to the Pit, or else let me die. O strange Madness! And to speak this to God himself, to say in the Face of God, *It is better for me to die than to live*: In Truth you are far in the Wrong, *Jonah*, for you were doing Good, and converting a whole City by the Means of an External Reformation, and you might have been instrumental in reforming the whole Kingdom of *Assyria*. No, no, that will not please, it is better for me to die than to live. Fy Man! you are quite mistaken, would you die in a Rage? Now, *Dost thou well to be angry?* some read it, *Art thou displeased in doing well?* They cannot magnify his Fault enough. Yes, I do well to be angry even unto Death. *Dost thou?* Art thou in a brave Temper of Soul to go in to Eternity, and to stand before God's Tribunal? Thou art mad, and in a Rage: And would you die in that Case, Man? Yes, says he. Truly God would have been Righteous to have taken him at his Word, and to have stricken him down presently: But O Meekness! O Mercy! He shews Mercy unto *Nineveh*, and he shews Mercy unto a mad Prophet. He is to be pitied, he is mad, let him alone. And then, in what a strong divine Way of Reasoning does our Lord treat with him? *Jonah*, will you tell me how concern'd you was for the *Gourd* that sprang up in a Night? We do not know indeed, whether by natural Force a Gourd can rise

rise in a Night, but this did rise in a Night, and it was quickly taken away again, and he fell into his old Mood again, *Let me die.* *Jehonah*, consider how concern'd you are for a Gourd, may not I be concern'd for the People of *Nineveh*? There are Six Score Thousand Children, young ones, not two Years of Age, and by a very modest Calcul, there might be six Times as many People above that Age, Old and Young; these would make about six or seven Hundred Thousand Persons in *Nineveh*, which would make Two-thirds of all the People that are in *Scotland*. In that City there were about Five and Thirty Score of Thousands, and neither was the Gourd thine, but mine, and I made all these Men and Women which you would have cut off: Many poor little ones you would have destroyed which are the Work of my Hands, and it is not very pleasant for me to destroy the Work of my Hands. Again, this is but one Gourd which you are concern'd for, but here are Multitudes: But nothing will convince him, and yet because of the Doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints, we must assert, That this Reasoning of God did bring him to his Wits again, and made him see his Folly. The Thing that I am driving at in all this, is, to let you see how far a Godly Man or Woman may harden themselves. And let Folk never cast up the Examples of some, by saying, Such
and

and such Men say so and so, and they do so
and so, and they are Godly Folk: The Word
is the Rule, and the Godliest of Folk may
trip now and then. The Lord soften your
Hearts.

This is the last SERMON that
Mr. *Webster* Preach'd in the
Tolbooth Church.

F I N I S.



